



NAFEA Student Scholarship Report

RURAL SCHOLARSHIP - BUNDABERG

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Rural Placement

On April 27th until the 3rd of June 2021, I started my 2nd placement as a student paramedic in the rural area of Bundaberg. It was the first time I had experienced a rural placement, something I had always wanted to do, although I did not have the financial stability to do so. However, thanks to the NAFEA Rural Student Scholarship I was supported and able to excel in my endeavor to learn rurally; particularly in an environment where the essential and integral skills of a paramedic's calm collected empathy, care and humanity are put to the test in a setting with longer transport and treatment times.

For those five weeks I experienced a tremendous variety of cases, ranging from high acuity, low acuity, transport jobs as well as attending patients that just required reassurance. Attending each and every patient challenged, enhanced and expanded the skills I had been taught at the university as well as those taught to me by my paramedic mentors. One of the biggest skills that this rural placement helped teach me was the ability to communicate and create a comforting, reassuring, caring and professional atmosphere for patients; a skill which all would describe as an essential requirement of being a paramedic. Its value is often under-stated, especially in the rural setting where greater transport times are expected and access to health care services can often start with the ambulance.

Other integral skills of effective timely treatment and assessment were also refined in my experience in Bundaberg, as often in a rural setting there is a community resilience that medical issues might only require attention if they are serious. Therefore, the critical abilities to identify and navigate complicated issues and cases was of great importance. I could not have asked for a better learning experience in Bundaberg, as I was exposed to and experienced many different situations whilst accompanied by some of the loveliest and greatly skilled paramedics. Just from the working experience alone, I found myself sad to be leaving come the end of my placement and wanting to attend another rural placement as soon as possible.

However, attending a rural placement is not something so simple. The cost alone of transport, accommodation and food is enough to strain a person's resources, leaving little room for entertainment and the ability to truly experience the wonders of working and studying rurally. A challenge I was uncertain I would be able to handle. The NAFEA scholarship assisted me greatly by removing an enormous stress and worry off my shoulders, knowing that I had one less worry to deal with allowed me to focus even more on enjoying the experience. Due to the scholarship, I was able to attend social events with other students (like a good pub feed after a hard day's shift), events in Bundaberg, such as the Bundaberg BBQ festival, as well as explore the city and its beautiful landscape and views.

Overall, the experience I had in Bundaberg was phenomenal, leaving me with lifelong friends, experiences, and skills. The NAFEA Scholarship is integral in this experience in allowing me to reap the rewards of a rural placement. Simply the transport and accommodation costs would have been enough to halt me from attending without the assistance from NAFEA. With the support, I was able to learn from and enjoy the experience to the fullest; Greatly improving my own skills as a student paramedic as well as my appreciation for working rurally. I would like to thank NAFEA for all the support they provide students, as without your help I would not have been able to fully immerse myself and have such a truly wonderful experience.

