

2021 Regional Scholarship recipient: Jess Daniels (Holyoake)



About me

My interest in rural health stemmed from my experience growing up in Narrogin, a small country town in the Wheatbelt region, coupled with the knowledge and experience I gained from completing a Bachelor of Health Promotion at Notre Dame. As a child, I was heavily involved in sports and participated in many sporting and community events within our close knit community. I never thought of myself, my family or my community having a disadvantage in relation to our health in comparison with people living in metropolitan areas. It was only once I moved to Perth and attended Uni, that I became aware of the poorer health outcomes that rural and remote communities experience and the limited access to health services in these communities.

In 2017, I commenced studying a Bachelor of Human Biology at Curtin, then transferred to a Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science at Notre Dame. As part of the degree, I was required to complete Health Promotion units. I found that the concept of promoting healthy behaviours and taking a more holistic approach to health resonated more with the vision that I had for my career and therefore changed to a Bachelor of Health Promotion. As a part of my Prac placements, I had the opportunity to plan, coordinate and evaluate Narrogin Senior High Schools first Health and Wellbeing Expo (the high school where I completed by education). During my placement, it became apparent to me that there is a lack of awareness of the health and wellbeing resources that are available young people, and limited professionals advocating for and promoting better health outcomes for young people. After the Expo, I developed my project proposal with this in mind and alongside my supervisor, came up with the concept of the Youth Early Intervention Social Media Project.

About my Scholarship Project

I have relocated back to Narrogin for 6 months to complete my scholarship project. I will be working collaboratively with the Wheatbelt Holyoake Prevention Team to develop the Youth Early Intervention Social Media Project, which will be an extension of the Youth Early Invention Project (funded by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation). The project will address alcohol and illicit drug use, promotion of positive mental and physical health, increased awareness of sexual health, and promoting positive life choices by providing information for young people, with a focus on minority populations such as Indigenous Australians and the LGBTIQ+ community. The project will draw upon the popularity of social media to develop a campaign on the Instagram platform that provides up-to-date information on these priority health areas. To do so, I will collaborate with local health professionals and services who are subject matter experts to provide evidence-informed information via this platform. The project will also provide an opportunity for strong and positive connections to be developed and strengthened between the local health professionals and services and young people. Essentially, the social media campaign will become an easily accessible evidence-informed platform for vulnerable young people to engage with to provide them with the information to make more positive life choices to improve their short and long term health and wellbeing.