

PATHWAYS INTO OUR SECTOR

Growing the domestic and family violence, sexual assault, women's health and wellbeing workforce.



Chris Ruyg, Save the Children Australia
Certificate IV in Mental Health

Leading Men's Behaviour Change in remote Queensland.

"I left school early because my father died. For 10 years, I worked in an engineering trade. For 12 years, I owned a milk run. Then my family agreed to a lifestyle change from the South Coast of New South Wales," Chris said.

That vision was realised when Chris's wife secured a job with the Carpentaria Shire Council, and a move to Normanton. Experience volunteering in sporting activity and schools equipped him with the interpersonal and networking skills to gain a teacher aide role.

"My advice to anyone considering a role in a remote region is to prioritise getting to know the people in your community, learning about their local culture and customs, and being humble."

A position in Medicare Locals' Healthy for Life programs followed.

"I delivered men's wellbeing programs to the local, mostly Aboriginal community, and was fortunate to work closely with an Aboriginal community member who helped me learn about his people and their culture," Chris said.

Chris was then engaged at the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centre, running family violence and anger management groups. A Certificate IV in Mental Health and other professional development opportunities boosted his knowledge and skills.

In 2020, Save the Children Australia offered Chris his current role.

"The biggest challenges are the stress that comes with hearing and seeing confronting behaviours and situations,

and the frustrations arising from the lack of specific support services we can refer men to in remote regions," Chris said.

"But these emotions are balanced by the many rewards. It's a very special feeling when someone 'gets it', and I can see that my work is making a difference."

Chris is grateful for the opportunities his work has provided, and he regularly reflects on the many advantages and opportunities he has had in his life.

Attracting and retaining skilled staff is difficult in remote regions.

"I'm still very committed to helping my community and I'll work hard to improve my current programs. That's a task I know will occupy all my energies into the foreseeable future."

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