

Igniting a passion for aged care

ACH GROUP

A new approach to placement for aged care specialty nursing students is promoting the sector as an interesting career and giving them a better understanding to the diversity and demands of working in the sector.



PHOTO: Rajni Jindal took part in the placement trial and now works as a Registered Nurse at ACH Group Kapara.

Aged care organisation ACH Group has been working with the University of South Australia (UniSA) to attract more nursing graduates by showcasing aged care as a rewarding career choice.

UniSA has established a new ongoing eight-week Aged Care Specialty Nursing Student Placement for third year Bachelor of Nursing students, replacing the traditional four-week model.

The new program has been successfully trialed for 12 months and is designed to ignite a passion in students who have an interest in working in aged care, while providing them with real insight and support to develop the skills required to be an aged care specialty nurse.

UniSA School of Nursing and Midwifery Course Coordinator Dr Catherine Hall says it is critical that students are given the chance to engage in experiential learning opportunities in the sector.

“It is very important for UniSA to be able to work with ACH Group so we can focus on enhancing the residential and community aged care clinical placement experience for both nursing students and facilities.”

UniSA has also developed an Aged Care Tool Kit as part of the program.

“The Tool Kit is a comprehensive reference point for what students should consider while they are on placement,” Dr Hall explains.

“It reinforces four key practice areas: Care Planning, Advanced Care Planning, Nutrition and Hydration and Mental Health.”

ACH Group ViTA Interprofessional Learning Coordinator Kirsty Marles says attracting graduates to the aged care sector will become more important than ever in South Australia as its workforce and the general population ages.

“This unique approach encourages students to consider aged care as an exciting and specialist career choice,” she says.

“The program will help change attitudes and encourage more students to consider working in aged care, where there are many career opportunities available.”

Rajni Jindal is one of the students who took part in the trial. She enjoyed her placement at ACH Group’s Perry Park residential living facility at Port Noarlunga so much that she applied for a job at ACH Group immediately after graduation.

She now works as a Registered Nurse at ACH Group residential living site Kapara at Glenelg South.

“Some people might think that hospital work will be more exciting, but I enjoy this work because it is all about early intervention and restoring health, which is very rewarding,” she says. “When I did my placements I was impressed by ACH Group. It’s a warm and friendly environment and everyone is made to feel welcome.”