

I registered to attend RAW only a few days before the weekend. My interest was sparked by the flyer posted at the Samuels Building foyer. The flyer was catchy and well-located, but in the future it would be better if such announcement of RAHMS activities contains contact details and a little blurb about what RAHMS is for those like me who never heard of RAHMS before.

I think the whole weekend was EXTREMELY well-prepared. The activities schedule and the list of things to bring were impressive – really helpful for someone like me who never went out camping before. I am also impressed by the background work that must have been hectic and tasking for the organisers. I think the commitment and wonderful work of the organising committee should be highly appreciated because it is certainly not an easy task to prepare everything while being medical students. The high quality of their work was reflected in the smooth running of all activities which fit very well with the tentative schedule.

I really appreciate the Nott family opening up to share their lives with us. They taught us what a rural life was like not only by words but more importantly by showing us the variety of activities. I also appreciate all the facilities that they provided for us, from the camping ground with the dunnies to the portable chairs and everything else.

I would like to thank Shannon Nott for coming up with this brilliant idea and making it come true. I cannot think of any better way to appreciate the rural life – the name “Rural Appreciation Weekend” perfectly reflected what the weekend was all about and what the participants brought home from the experience. As an international student, I only had a vague idea of what the challenges were if I were to live and practice as a GP in rural Australia, and the weekend revealed them to me in ways that far exceeded my expectations. The weekend also showed me the great things about living in rural areas e.g. the strong sense of community. The invited speakers shared with us their differing experiences which were very informative and addressed some of the basic questions that I had in mind.

Another very enjoyable aspect of the weekend was the great company of participants from UNSW and Wollongong Uni. The various activities were very effective in breaking the ice and enhance the group dynamics, and by the end of the weekend pretty much all participants had interacted with others. Apart from exchanging card games and party tricks, I had a number of interesting conversations with other participants that helped me to reflect on the situations that we observed. Again, I attribute these positive experiences to the careful scheduling of activities and breaks by the organising committee.

Overall, I am very satisfied with the RAW weekend. I strongly believe that such activity should be conducted regularly, at least annually, so that more health-related students have the opportunity to be exposed to the rural life. I would also like to thank whoever subsidised the program so that the students did not have to pay too much for it. The RAW weekend was my first contact with RAHMS, and I am now very keen on participating more in RAHMS’ activities. Lastly, I would like to suggest RAHMS also promote themselves and their activities among postgraduate students, especially those in Public Health. The School of Public Health and Community Medicine has many masters students and PhD candidates that might be interested to participate and contribute to RAHMS’ activities.

Brahmaputra Marjadi
PhD candidate
UNSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine