



## Stronger Rural Health – Teaching – train in the regions, stay in the regions

As part of the Stronger Rural Health Strategy to support teaching, training, recruitment and retention in the regions, the Government will establish a Murray–Darling Medical Schools Network. The network will include the University of NSW (Wagga Wagga), University of Sydney (Dubbo), Charles Sturt University/Western Sydney University (Orange), Monash University (Bendigo, Mildura), and University of Melbourne/La Trobe University (Shepparton, Bendigo, Wodonga). The Government will also include Curtin University (for medical training) and La Trobe University (for nursing and allied health training) in the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program.

### Why is this important?

This measure will address rural doctor shortages, improve the future distribution of the medical workforce and build on the Government's existing investment in rural undergraduate training through the RHMT program. This provides a continuum for doctors to learn, train and work in the regions. This will be complemented by work being undertaken by the National Rural Health Commissioner to develop the National Rural Generalist Pathway and channel future rural generalists to rural and remote Australia.

This is a fundamental change in the training and supply of rural and regional doctors. Enrolling rural students and having them undertake long term rural training increases the number of doctors who choose to practise in rural areas.

The network is supported by a number of strategies being implemented, through the education and training portfolio, to better manage medical graduate supply and support better rural workforce outcomes.

A pool of medical Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP), drawn from existing allocations, will be established to provide the Government with the flexibility to address health workforce priorities as they arise over time. The pool will withhold two per cent of existing commencing medical CSPs (up to 60 CSP places) every three years for redistribution between providers through a competitive process, starting from 2021.

The first redistribution round will prioritise rural and regional areas of need. It will also prioritise the Government's commitment to enable students to undertake end-to-end medical training in the regions. Fifty per cent (30 CSP places) will be allocated to a new medical school in Orange. In the first round as a transition arrangement, universities whose medical CSP allocations are reduced will be allowed a commensurate increase in their international FFP medical enrolments.

Subsequent rounds will focus on emerging medical workforce pressures and policy priorities. This will be informed by triennial national medical workforce data assessments through the use of the new HeadS UPP Tool.

**It is important to note there are no new medical Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) being established.**

**Who will benefit?**

Local rural communities will benefit from the network's end to end rural medical school programs through medical student/trainee services, a larger university presence, associated infrastructure, and professional support over the longer term. Establishing the network will enable local students to remain in their communities while they study and train, and provide supervised medical services to rural patients. Rural hospitals will benefit through increased staffing and workforce sustainability. Building schools infrastructure will also create local jobs.

**How much will this cost?**

This measure is part of the Stronger Rural Health Strategy. The Murray–Darling Medical Schools Network will receive an investment of \$95.4 million.

The establishment of the network is subject to final contractual arrangements and universities meeting the requirements of the Australian Medical Council for accreditation.