

## A Place-based Approach to Rural Medical Education

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Australian medical education programs are changing through rural clinical schools delivering good student training but there continues to be ambiguity in medical workforce distribution. Locally grown solutions are required, leading to establishment of 26 Regional Training Hubs (RTHs) nationally. RTHs aim to facilitate seamless rural training pathways from medical school into postgraduate vocational training.

Our research was a mixed methods critical realist evaluation. We examined qualitative and quantitative data from reports and undertook 21 interviews with RTH leaders.

Findings highlight RTHs achievements since establishment, in mid-2017. Most notably they facilitate local partnerships for novel training opportunities; support and mentor medical students and graduates interested in rural practice; produce podcasts promoting rural practice; mapped different speciality training pathways; maximise training and supervision capacity; and provide clinical leadership. However, they have experienced challenges including access to workforce data, navigating complex recruitment and training cycles, influencing organisational change and limited funding for new positions. RTHs are a linchpin to bring together organisations to co-design training opportunities in rural and remote contexts.

Our analysis culminated in a new way to theoretically conceptualise postgraduate medical training called a place-based approach to medical education. Currently, RTHs can be classified into four types: 1) emerging 2) collaborative 3) networked 4) sustainable.

This presentation will discuss this typology and highly contextualised, place-based approach not previously been applied in medical education. This approach is applicable to rural medical education in disadvantaged geographical locations. Whilst difficult to determine direct causal effects, it enables an understanding of how RTHs work towards achieving rural workforce outcomes.

Place-based medical education takes account of local knowledge about different actors and community needs. RTHs are making valuable, unique contributions to building the rural and remote medical workforce by working with a multitude of organisations to co-design creative local training opportunities and seamless rural training pathways.