

# Symbiotic partnership to grow the health workforce in rural and remote Australia

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Over recent years there has been increasing focus on the need to build clinical workforce training capacity in rural and remote health service settings as a mechanism to meet increasing demands for student clinical placements across health professions, and as a strategy to increase health professionals choosing a career in rural, remote and Indigenous health. At the same time, government policy at a state, territory and federal level is seeking to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the health workforce.

This paper will present a synthesis of the literature and findings of projects undertaken since 2012 that have sought to identify and/or develop clinical workforce training capacity in rural and remote settings with particular consideration of the Aboriginal Health Worker and Practitioner workforce. Projects included in this synthesis are drawn from the Northern Territory, Victoria, Western Australia and nationally.

As a result of the synthesis, a model for clinical workforce training has emerged that is underpinned by a symbiotic partnership between the:

- training organisation/provider
- trainee
- employer and workplace.

This paper will describe the key features of the partnership model, and structural shifts required to better support the education and training of Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal Health Practitioners to achieve educational outcomes. The central role of the clinical educator within primary health care services and settings will be discussed as a crucial, but often missing element that is required to support training, education and workforce development in rural and remote Australia, not only of Aboriginal Health Practitioners, but nursing, medical and allied health professions.

Having this essential human resource (**people**) working in the right **places** expands **possibilities** to build the rural, remote and Indigenous health workforce. Mechanisms for how this clinical educator role can be supported will be described.