



Mending the road behind and building the road ahead—the journey of a rural generalist in Papua New Guinea

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What does general practice actually mean for doctors in Papua New Guinea's remote corners? This session is a partly personal, partly philosophic, wholly practical review the lessons gleaned during a career in a new health service in one of the country's more troubled and remote corners.

It seeks to outline some of the history of health care in PNG, a country of nearly 8 million people, and Australia's nearest neighbour and former colonial territory. It discusses the challenges the country faces today and outlines some of the new initiatives particularly in respect to the training of young PNG doctors to take up what is arguably the country's most challenging medical career available—that of the district medical officer.

What mistakes have been made? What of the successes? What has been learned? How can we strengthen partnerships to help move further towards bridging the enormous gap that exists between the status quo and the provision of a basic, competent, accessible and reliable health service for the large majority of Papua New Guineans who still live in rural and remote locations?