

University of Newcastle
Department of Rural Health



Where are they now?

Tracking allied health workforce outcomes
after rural placement.

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BACKGROUND

- Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program
 - University Department of Rural Health & Rural Clinical School
- Support for rural health student placements in order to help build health workforce capacity in rural and remote areas



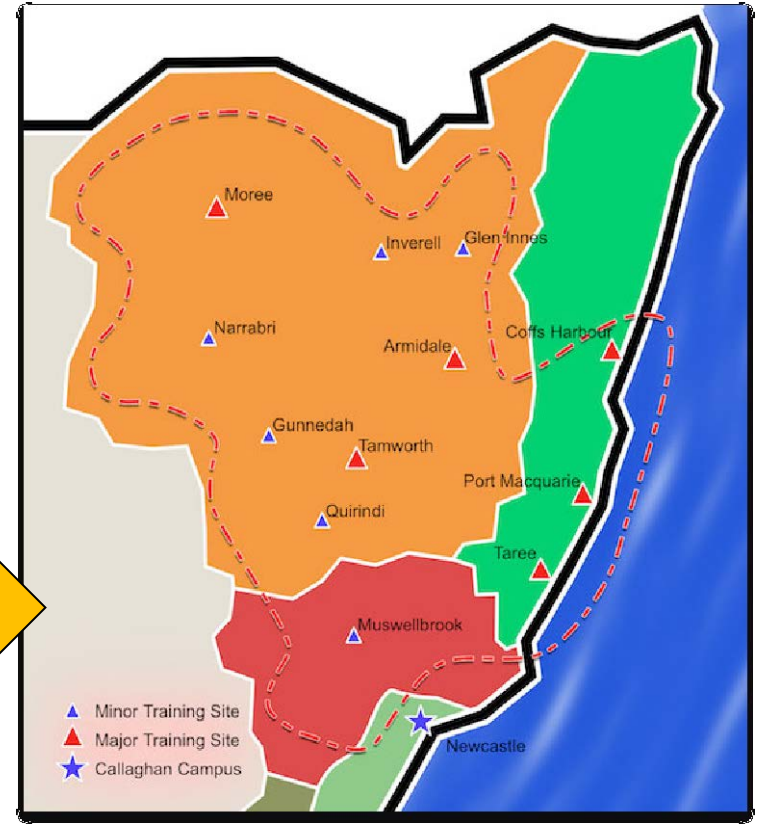
UONDRH



- University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health (UONDRH) offers
 - short-term and long-term, rural immersion placement experiences
 - allied health, medicine and nursing students
- Students live and study together in a multi-disciplinary environment
 - interprofessional learning and community engagement



PLACEMENT AREAS



AIM

- To track the employment outcomes of allied health students undertaking short and long-term rural immersion placements.



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METHOD

- Longitudinal, mixed-methods study design
- Allied health students participating in short and long-term, immersion placement experiences at UONDRH in the disciplines of:
 - Diagnostic Radiography
 - Nutrition and Dietetics
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Speech Pathology



REMOTENESS CLASSIFICATION

Australian Standard Geographical Classification- RA

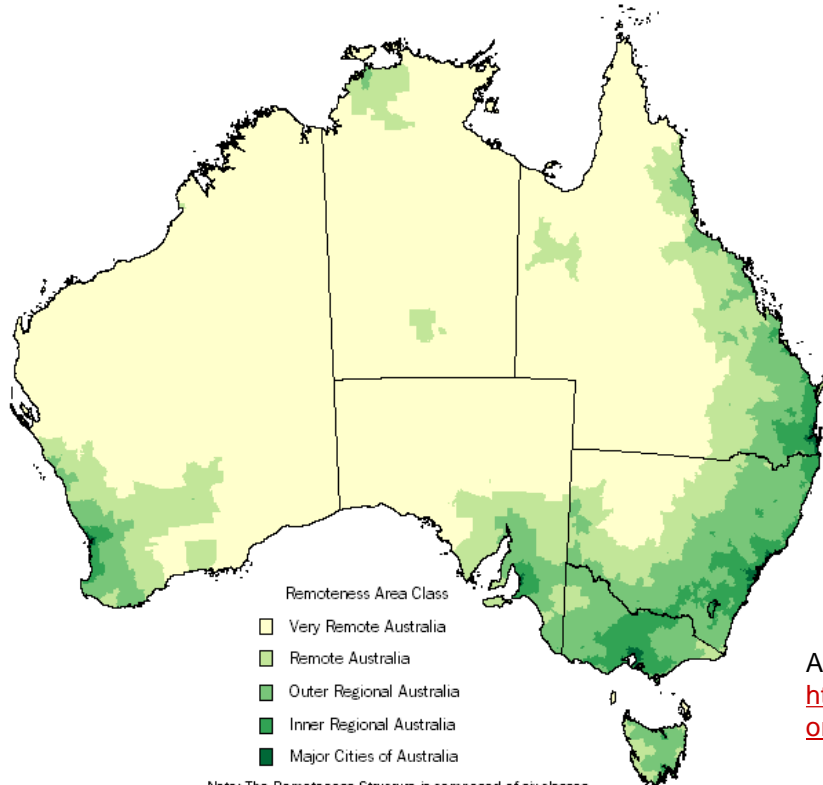
RA1 – Major cities

RA2 – Inner Regional

RA3 – Outer Regional

RA4 – Remote

RA5 – Very Remote



Note: The Remoteness Structure is composed of six classes.
The migratory class is not mapped.

Accessed from:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure#Anchor2c>



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METHOD

- Students are invited to participate in one or more components of the study. These include:

i.

**End of
placement
survey***

Short and long
term students

ii.

**Semi-
structured
interview**

Long term
students

iii.

**1, 3 & 5
year
follow-up
surveys**

Short and long
term students

**based on Rural Allied Health Workforce Survey*



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METHOD – DATA COLLECTED

(i) End of placement survey

- **Rural/urban background**
- Satisfaction with placement
- **Consideration of work rural**

(ii) Semi-structured interview

- Rural placement experience
- Influence of rural placement on career plans

(iii) 1, 3 & 5 year follow-up surveys

- **Employment and position data**
- **Placement influence on workplace choice**
- **Reasons for staying or leaving**

Statistical tests: Chi squared (X²), Odds ratio

RESULTS

- Completed follow-up surveys at:
 - 1 year response rate 57%
 - 3 year response rate 53%

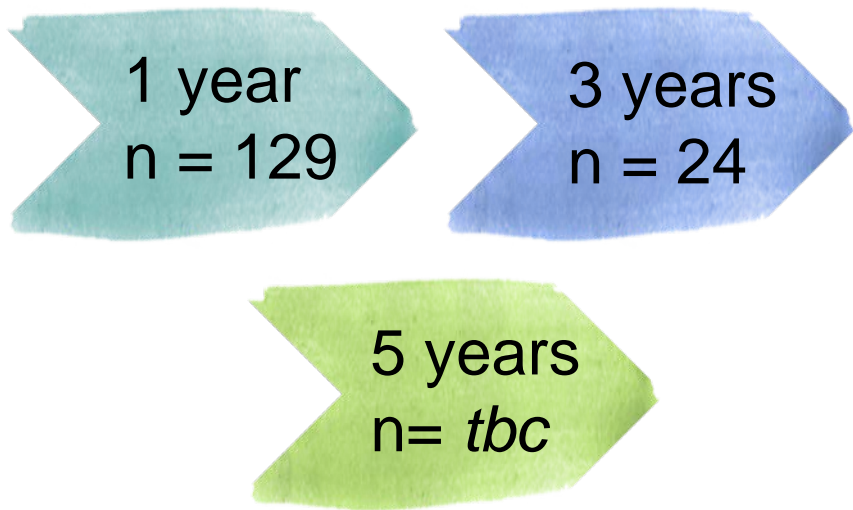


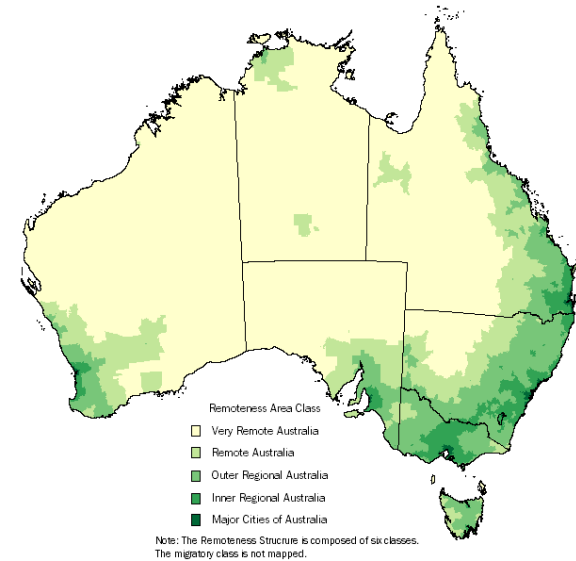
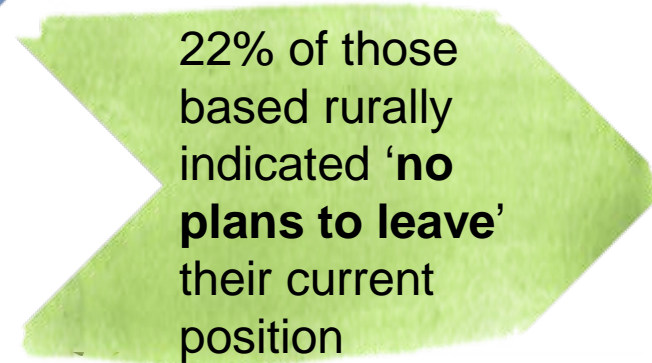
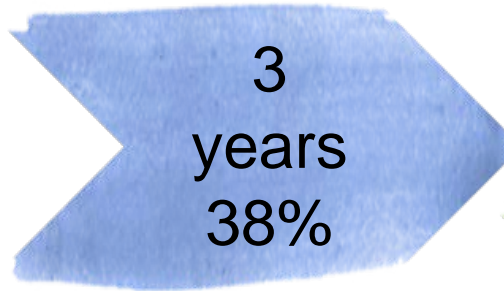
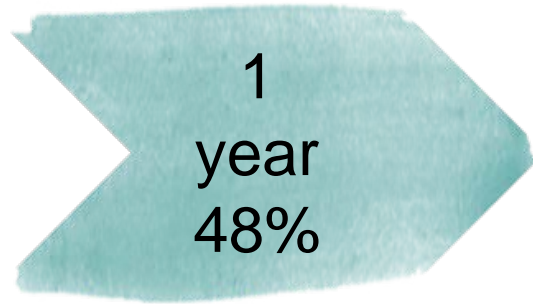
Table 1: Position data - 1 and 3 years

| Position data | 1 year | 3 years |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employed in profession | 86% | 91.7% |
| Salaried | 74.4% | 62.5% |
| Full-time | 65.1% | 58.3% |
| Temporary role | 46.5% | 33.3% |
| Self-employed | 6.2% | 4.2% |
| Sole practice – <i>always/often</i> | 15% | 16.6% |

RESULTS

Follow-up surveys

- Proportion of graduates working rural (RA2-RA5)



RESULTS

- **Rural origin** was a significant factor in *choosing a rural work location after graduation* ($p = 0.030$)
- **Rural placement experience** also had a significant influence ($p = 0.01$) on *graduates' decision to consider entering rural practice*



RESULTS



- **Students with a rural or remote background** were 2.35 times more likely to be located in a rural or remote workplace at one year than graduates from a urban background (95%CI 1.056-5.229).
- **Graduates of urban origin** who chose a rural workplace location were 3.938 times (95%CI 1.573–9.854) more likely to have been influenced by their rural placement experience than those who undertook work in a urban location.



REASONS FOR PLANNING TO LEAVE

Table 2: Reasons given for planning to leave – *multiple responses given*

| Reasons for leaving | Rural based n=67 | Urban based n= 42 |
|--|--|---|
| Highest response | -Better career prospects (30.9%) | -Moving to a preferred location (38.1%) |
| 2nd highest response | -Moving to a preferred location (29.4%) | -Better career prospects (26.2%) |
| 3rd highest response | -Contract or temporary position (19.1%) | -Never intended to stay -To earn a better income -Relocation of partner (each 21.4%) |

DISCUSSION

- First study to track allied health workforce outcomes from RHMT UDRH program over 1 - 5 years¹
- Outcomes are favorable compared to UON Australian Graduate Survey data (2011 – 2015): 23.7% working rural or remote¹

Limitations

- Participants may be more positive towards rural practice

Future research

- Seeking further data from publically available sources to track outcomes. Further analysis of qualitative data.



¹ Brown, L.; Smith, T.; Wakely, L.; Wolfgang, R.; Little, A.; Burrows, J. Longitudinal tracking of Workplace Outcomes for Undergraduate Allied Health Students Undertaking Placements in Rural Australia. *J. Allied Health* **2017**, Summer, 46, (in press).



CONCLUSIONS



- This study provides insights into the **influence of rural placements** on future workplace location and the **external factors** that impact on allied health graduate intention to leave a rural or urban areas.
- Ongoing support of rural placements for students of rural and urban background will continue to help address rural allied health workforce shortages.
- Ongoing longitudinal data is required to determine the longer term workforce outcomes and barriers to retention.



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