



# Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of existing professional support structures for doctors in rural and remote settings

## Information bulletin

### Background

The Department of Health and Aged Care has engaged Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA, led by Deborah Roczo) in collaboration with KBC Australia (Kris Battye) and BOS Health (Belinda O'Sullivan) for an exciting new project. The project aims to **identify and evaluate the effectiveness of existing professional support structures for doctors in rural and remote settings**.

Since 2000, vacancy rates for doctors have increased significantly Australia-wide, with recruitment and retention challenges most pronounced in rural, remote, and First Nations communities.

Australia relies heavily on International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in these communities. A 2023 Kruk review has recommended exploring support structures for IMGs in rural settings, in line with the National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021–2031 actions, to identify and use effective support structures for rural doctors. This requires a national stocktake and evaluation of professional support activities and programs for rural doctors in Australia.

### Project objectives

- Identify existing professional support for rural and remote doctors in Australia
- Evaluate the effectiveness of professional support activities and programs
- Develop recommendations, based on findings.

### What is professional support?

Professional supports include systems, programs, organisations, activities or people/resources that assist doctors in their work and career. They can be formal or informal, easily recognisable or not.

Professional support activities might include things like workplace orientation and integration, up-skilling and exam support, supervision, mentorship/well-being support and career development, professional networks, resources and back-up systems, along with communities of practice, outreach and telehealth supports, among other things.

### Enrol in this project

The HMA team wants to talk to you about what you're doing to professionally support rural doctors. Under ethical approval from Monash University, we invite you to register your interest in this project. Please click on this [LINK](#) to find out more about the project and register. Data collection will commence in September 2024.

### More information

If you would like more information, please contact:

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