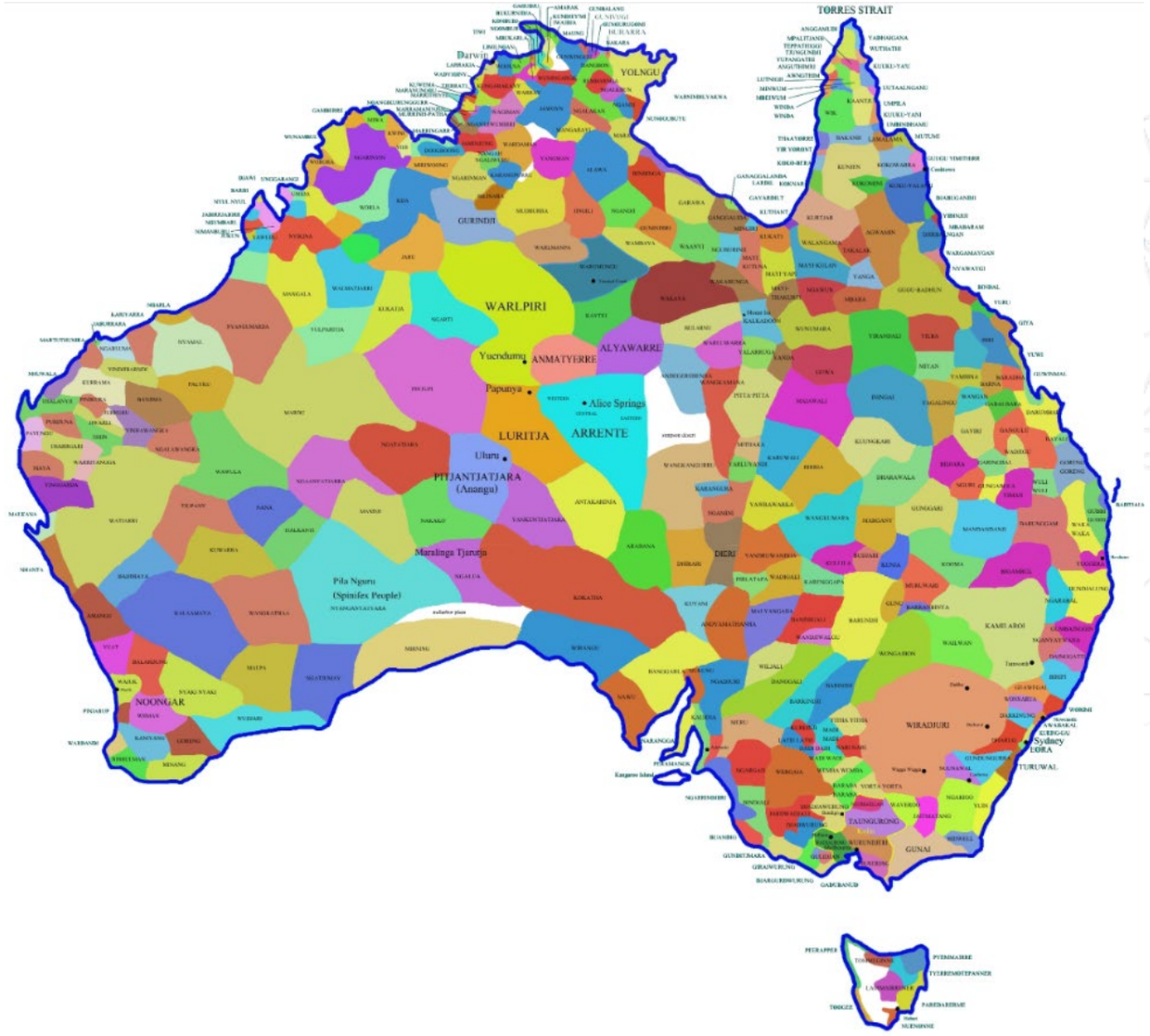
The PARTNER Network

The First National Rural Practice-Based Research Network

Australian Teletrial Program
Access to clinical trials, closer to home

Dr Suzie Harte, Kerry Leggett,
Natalii Paczkowski
PARTNER National Operations
7th September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country





THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Inclusion Statement

Everyone is welcome here. We want you to feel that you are welcome to be your authentic self here without judgement. You are welcome to use your own strategies to help you feel engaged and relaxed.

Our values:

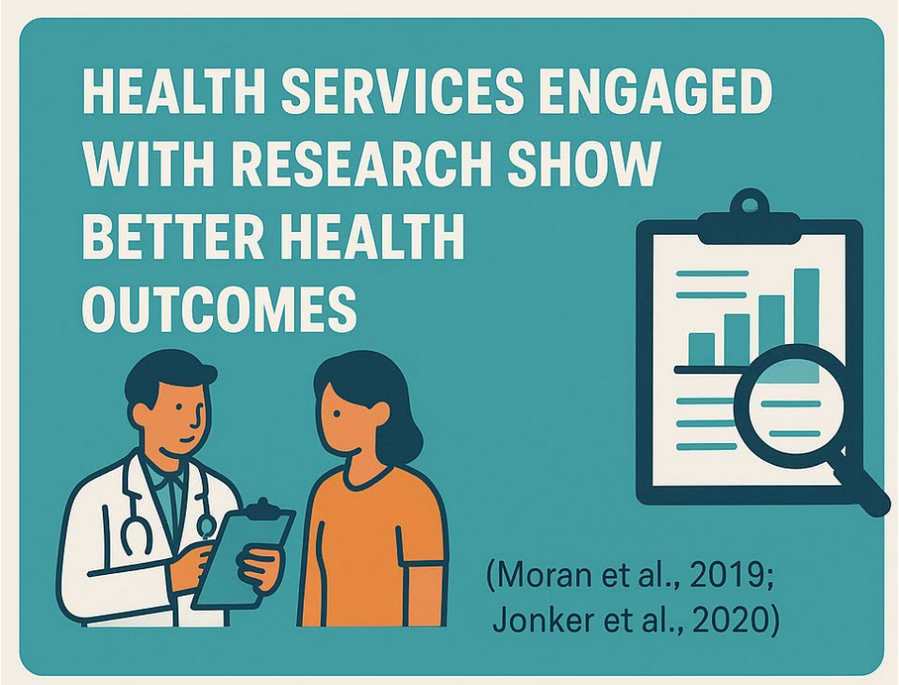
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Respect
- Collaboration



The Long Road to Rural Primary Care Networks 2026

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Benefits of rural research





PARTNER

PARTNER: Addressing barriers to equity

3 out of 10 Australians live rurally



Most healthcare is delivered here



Most research happens here



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What helps people stay for 10 years and not 10 months?

"A small rural community is most likely to attract and retain clinicians when it offers a meaningful career, research and learning opportunities, strong community connections, family support, manageable workloads and appropriate financial incentives."
WHO, 2021

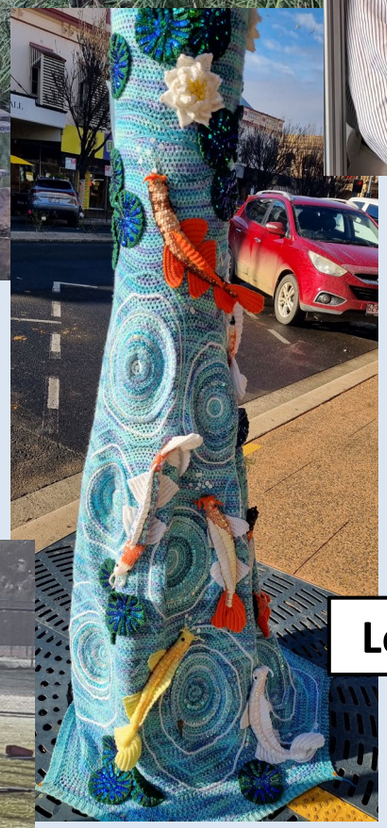
WHO guideline on health workforce development, attraction, recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas

An update of the WHO guideline *Increasing access to health workers in remote and rural areas through improved retention: global policy recommendations* (2010)

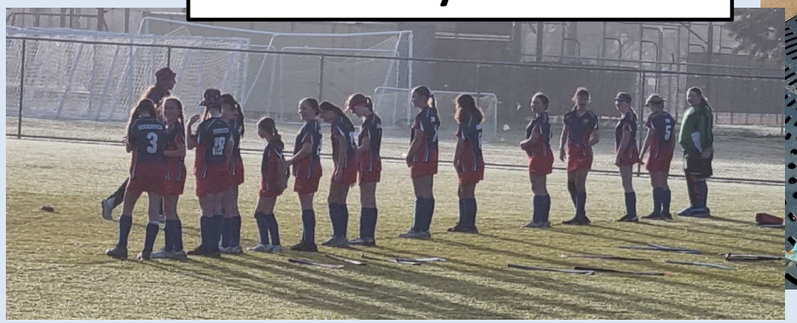
World Health Organization

Meaningful Career

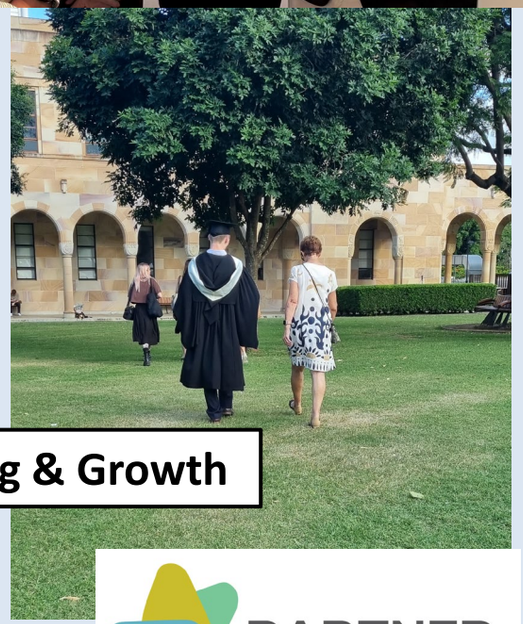




Community Connection



Learning & Growth



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RETENTION
Research opportunities
Further qualifications
Professional development
Rural and remote training
Rural background

Many possibilities in health research

Models of care Workforce retention Quality improvement Patient experiences Service delivery
Community engagement Education and training Drugs and devices Nursing and allied health practice

Research is a tool for change, and we need everyone to be involved

Community roles:

Participate
- Join studies
- Share experiences
- Help collect information

Advise
- Join advisory groups
- Review research questions
- Help interpret findings

Co-Design
- Identify priorities
- Develop projects
- Shape methods and outcomes

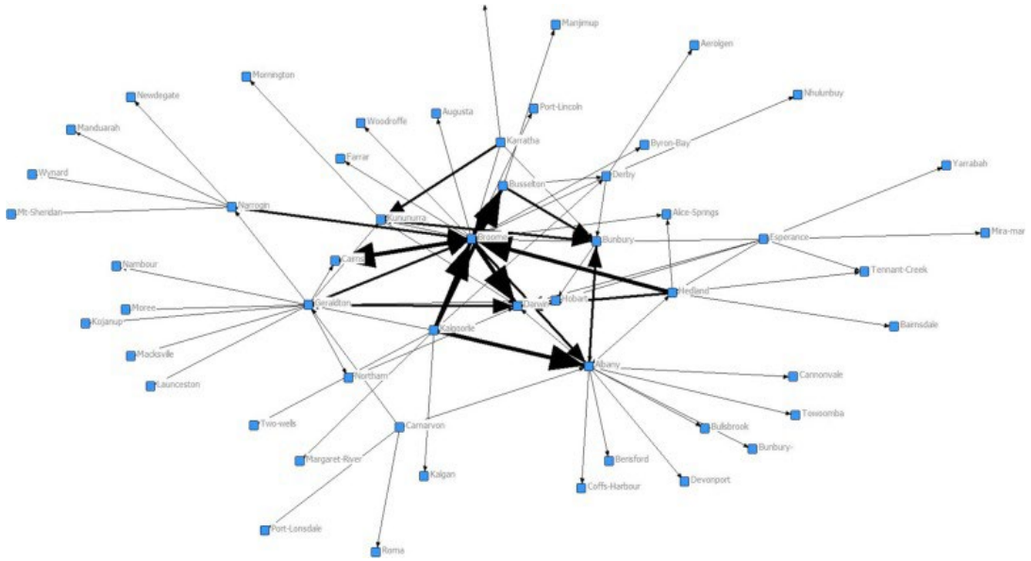
Lead
- Community-led research
- Lived-experience leadership
- Local ownership of solutions

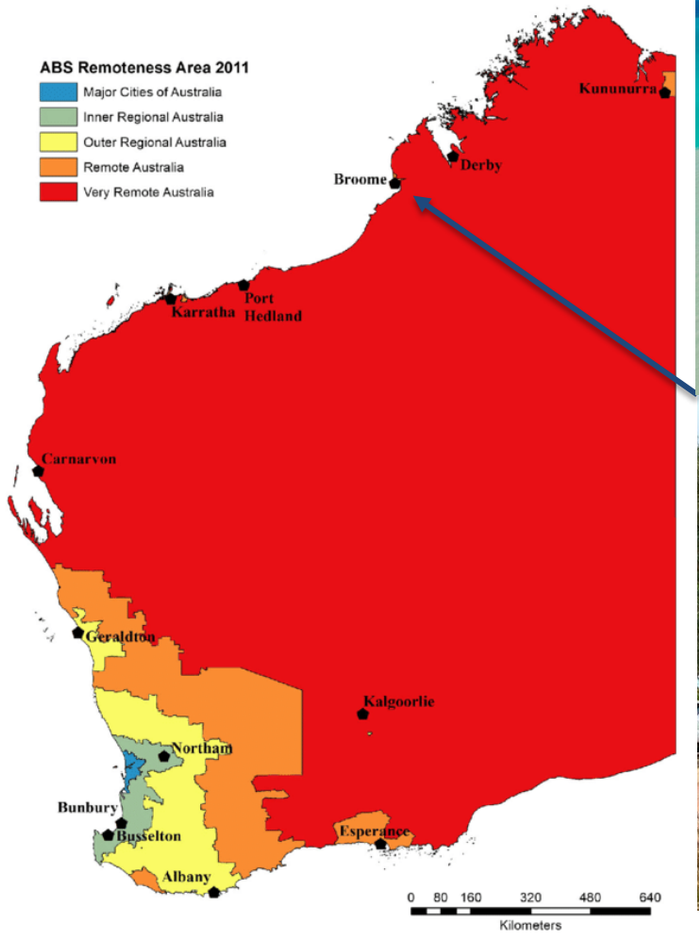


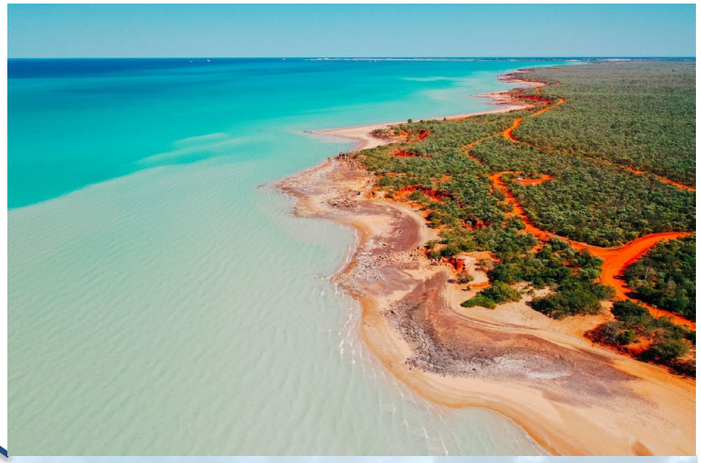
What question do you want answered?.....

Broome, Remote North-West Western Australia

- **709** RCSWA graduates examined
- **124** identified in rural practice
- **Broome** was the most connected rural location









https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12913-019-4132-z

Mudgee and Gulgong, Central West New South Wales

The problem

- Gulgong had no GP clinic, and Mudgee practices had closed their books.

The response

- The community, council and local mining companies formed Doctors 4 Mudgee Region.

The result

- GP services returned to Gulgong, and
- Mudgee Medical Centre reopened its books.



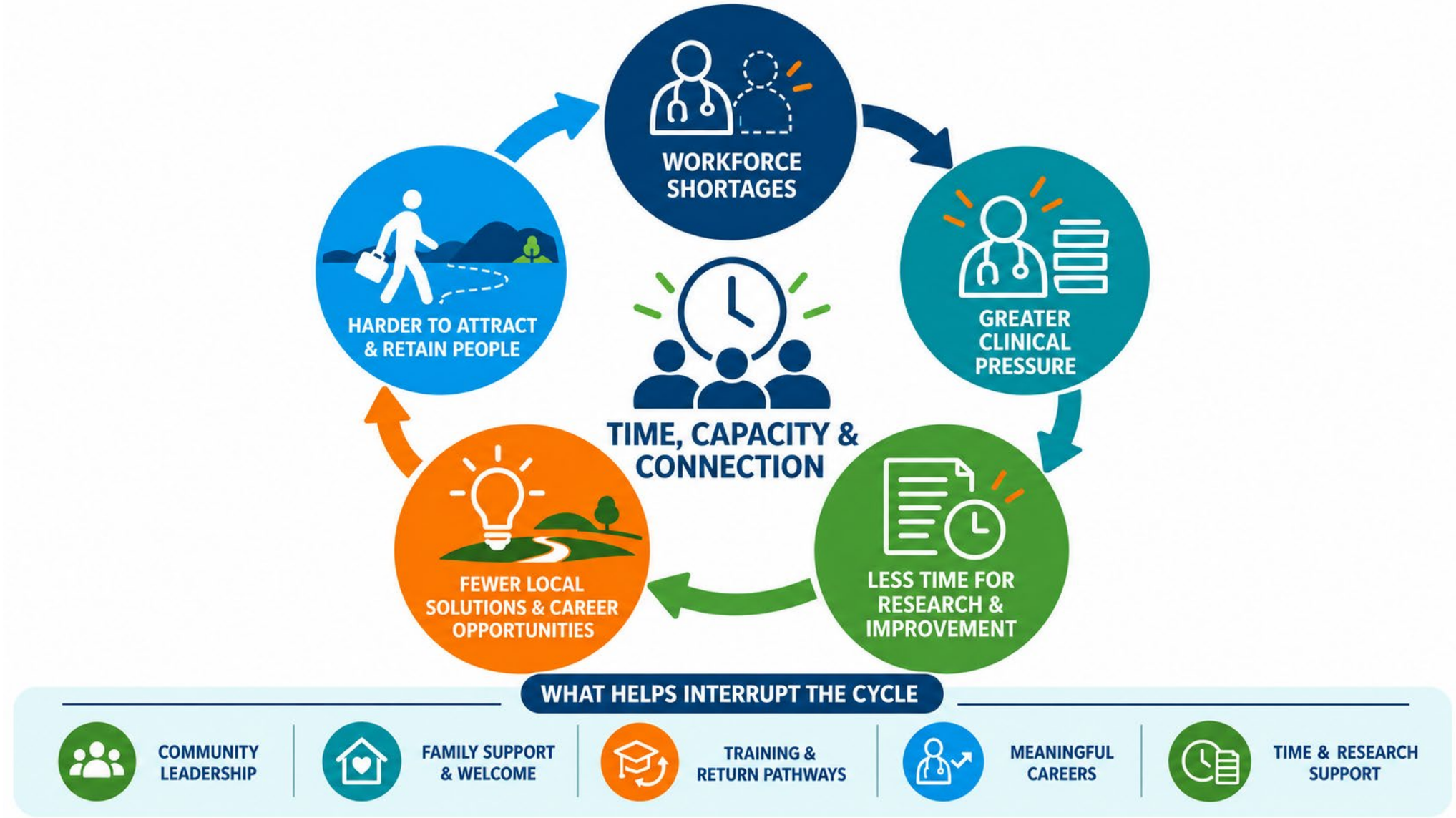




https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-15/gulgong-gp-clinic-reopening-lifeline-for-the-community/106174008

Financial incentives helped - but so did housing, schools, partner employment and community welcome.

Interrupting the Familiar Systems Based Issues



Workshop Aim

Research isn't just about generating evidence. It's about building capability, strengthening partnerships, developing local leaders, attracting investment and creating communities where health professionals want to live and work.

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Group Discussions

3 questions – 15min each

Paper and pens provided – please make some notes

If there is something that you think is important – add a sticky dot

Additional prompts are on your table if you need ideas
Notes will be collated for discussion at the end

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Question1 - Personal Perspective

What has shaped your experience of healthcare, health workers, and health research in rural communities?

Wrapping up question 1

If you could change one thing tomorrow to improve healthcare, workforce retention, or health research for you, what would it be?

Question 2 - Community Perspective

What are the issues facing rural communities in engaging and retaining health professionals and participating in research?

Wrapping up question 2

Which community-level change would have the greatest impact if it could be implemented immediately?

Question 3 - Systems Perspective

What changes or supports are needed to build lasting partnerships in research and strengthen the rural health workforce?

Wrapping up question 3

If you could recommend one priority action for decision-makers to implement tomorrow, what would it be?



WHERE WE ARE NOW

Q1 – Personal perspective



Q2 – Community perspective



Q3 – Systems perspective



PARTNER: A National Primary Care-Based Research Network

The PARTNER Network works to increase equity in rural primary care research by connecting researchers with rural practices, supporting locally relevant and deliverable studies, and building the capacity of rural communities to participate in and benefit from research.

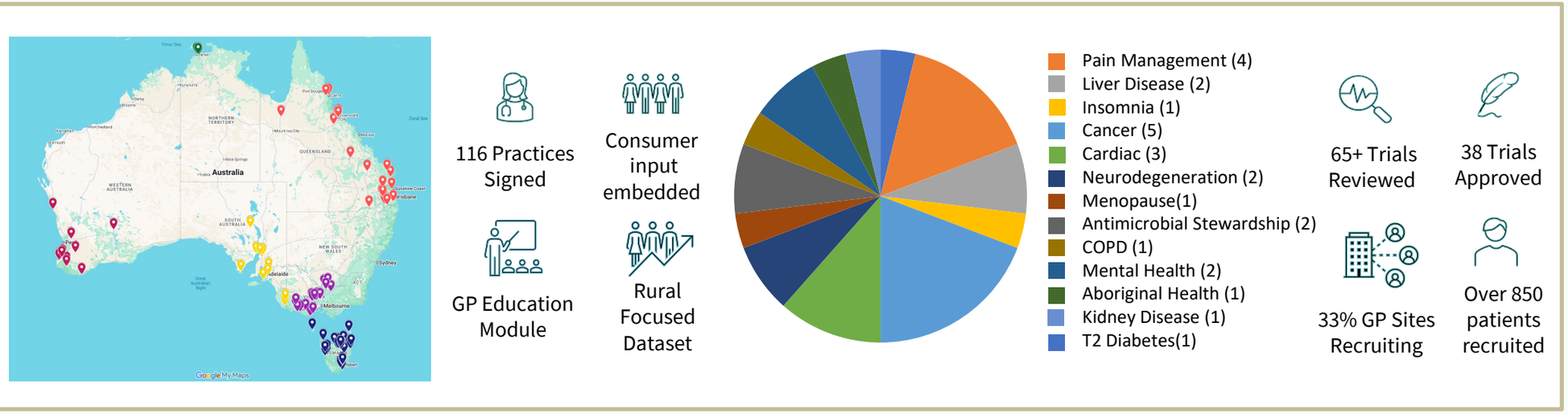


Fig 1. PARTNER Network Progress and research pipeline development



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Thank you!

Questions?

PARTNER

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Partnernetwork.com.au