



Annual Report

2022 / 2023



Contents

Note of Appreciation	2
Message from the RWAV Board Chair	3
Message from the RWAV CEO	4
RWAV Board of Directors	5
RWAV Team Members	7
Solving the Rural Healthcare Challenge	8
The RWAV Approach	9
The Victorian Rural Health Awards	10
Recruitment Solutions	12
Connecting GP Locums to Health Services	14
GP Programs	15
Responding to the Urgent Need for Allied Health	16
The Future of Rural and Regional Healthcare	17
RWAV Grants and Incentives	18
The Mental Health Initiative	20
Outreach Programs Providing Much Needed Health Services to Communities	21
Reflecting on Our RAP Achievements	22
RWAVs Engagement Activities	23
Registrar Training Research Projects	24
Other Key Events and Stakeholder Partnerships	25
Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census and the Health Workforce Needs Assessment	26
Partnerships and Collaborations	28
The RWAV Conference 2023	30
Conferences and Presentations	31
Financial Statements	32

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document and the RWAV website may contain images or names of people who may have since passed away.

A Note of Appreciation to Healthcare Teams in Victoria

We at RWAV would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated health professionals across rural and regional Victoria, whose passion and tireless efforts are a constant source of inspiration to us all. We are committed to supporting their work and highlighting their invaluable contribution to the wellbeing of our local communities.

Thank you!

RWAV would like to acknowledge and thank our funders, the Commonwealth and Victorian State Governments. RWAV's important work of supporting the provision of healthcare to rural and regional areas across Victoria would not happen without this support.

Acknowledgement of Country

RWAV acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation, on which our office stands, and the Traditional Custodians throughout Victoria where our services are delivered. We recognise their continuing care and connection to the land and waters as enduring stewards across Victoria. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and respectfully acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners wherever this Annual Report is being read.

Our Annual Report is produced using recycled paper, contributing to our sustainability efforts.



Message from the RWAV Board Chair



I have been delighted to witness the significant strides taken by the organisation this year. We were able to host our first ever RWAV Conference, expand and significantly enhance the Victorian Rural Health Awards and launch a revamped Strategic Plan that reflects our evolution. Operationally, RWAV increased its program spend on the previous year, and will also deliver a surplus financial result for the year.

These achievements are a testament to how far we have come. The team at RWAV did it all in the face of significant cost and workforce pressures that continue to impact the healthcare sector in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, an ever-changing policy landscape and cybersecurity threats. Thank you to all staff members and the Board at RWAV.

I would like to particularly thank Trevor Carr, who completed his role as RWAV's CEO earlier this year. With his three years of leadership, RWAV was able to become a braver advocate on rural health issues and solutions. The organisation was also able to implement significant reforms to enhance our governance, business systems and approach to stakeholder engagement under his guidance.

Thanks to Trevor, we are now well-placed to reach new heights with the next Strategic Plan, which I have no doubt will flourish with Lauren Cordwell at the helm as CEO. For over five years, Lauren has demonstrated exceptional strategic vision by being at the forefront and leading a number of practical solutions to address rural health challenges for communities in Victoria during her time at RWAV.

A big focus of the past year was also the development of RWAV's next Strategic Plan. I am proud that we have been able to create a more exciting, bold and progressive plan than we ever have before and offer my thanks to those who contributed to the final version.

I welcome our rural network and all our colleagues and invite them to continue collaborating with us towards our new strategic direction. Many of you have worked with us for years now, and we truly value all the opportunities RWAV has been given to be part of initiatives or conversations on ways to support the rural health workforce. I also look forward to RWAV engaging in new partnerships with those who share our goal for better rural healthcare in Victoria.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Morton Rawlin'.

Adjunct Associate Professor Morton Rawlin AM

Board Chair, Rural Workforce Agency Victoria

Message from the RWAV CEO



It has been a transformative year for the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV).

We have increased our support for health professionals in rural Victoria via our grants program, and invested more time in research and collaborative projects. We hosted a health service access round table in Nhill, and facilitated professional development workshops in Traralgon, Shepparton, Horsham and Bendigo. While the challenges of recruiting health professionals to rural Victoria remain, we are pleased to have supported the relocation of a number of primary care and mental health professionals to important roles in rural Victoria.

Victoria has hundreds of wonderful rural communities. We understand the vital contribution that health professionals make to these communities. This year, we have increased our investments and commitment to rural Victoria, which have seen:

- more than 3,273 outreach services delivered to 45,851 patients
- 64 medical, nursing and allied health students supported to undertake rural placements
- 113 GP locums providing essential VMO and after-hours services
- more than \$3 million of professional development support to rural health professionals
- 25 doctors joining a GP Fellowship program.

Thank you to the truly brilliant team at RWAV for enabling this work to occur.

As we mark a new chapter for RWAV together, I am hopeful our new Strategic Plan sets us on a course to strengthen our recruitment and workforce support programs. We intend to increase our efforts to support First Nations health, making new connections and building on our great partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO).

As we reflect on the year and plan for the future, I wish to thank the RWAV Board for their leadership and commitment to RWAV. I also want to acknowledge the amazing RWAV team, who are creative, hardworking and driven to support healthcare in rural Victoria, and I give special thanks to Trevor Carr who finished as CEO this year.

It is a privilege to work collaboratively with like-minded organisations across Victoria and Australia. I thank the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for entrusting us to lead this essential work. I am confident that our combined efforts will make healthcare in rural Victoria better for the 1.6 million people who call rural Victoria home.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Lauren Cordwell

CEO, Rural Workforce Agency Victoria

RWAV Board of Directors



Adj. Assoc. Prof. Morton Rawlin AM

Board Chair

BMed, MMedSci, FRACGP, FARGP, FACRRM, DipPractDerm,
DipMedHyp, DipFP, DipBusAdmin, GAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Chair, RWAV Board
Member, Governance Committee
Member, Strategy, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Member, People and Culture Committee



Ms Jane Poletti

Board Director

LLB, BSc, MMgt (Strategic Foresight), GAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Chair, Governance Committee



Aff. Prof. Grant Phelps

Board Director

BMBS, MBA, FRACP, FRACMA, FAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Deputy Board Chair
Chair, Strategy, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Member, Nominations and Remuneration Committee



Board and Leadership Team at the Strategic Planning day, March 2023

RWAV Board of Directors



Ms Suni Campbell

Board Director

BBus(Human Resources Management), GAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Chair, People and Culture Committee

Member, Strategy, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Committee



Dr Thileepan Naren

Board Director

MBBS, DCH, PGDIPSURGANAT, MHM, MPH, FRACGP

Special Responsibilities:

Member, Audit and Risk Committee

Resigned 21 January 2023



Mr Roger Chao

Board Director

BA(Politics/Philosophy), BEc, GDipBus, MBA, GAICD, FGIA

Special Responsibilities:

Chair, Audit and Risk Committee



Dr Louise Manning

Board Director

BSci(Hons), Dip Lang, MD, FRACGP, FACRRM, MAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Member, Strategy, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Committee

Member, Audit and Risk Committee



Mr Mathew Muldoon

Board Director

CA, BEc(Acc), RITP, MAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Member, Audit and Risk Committee



Dr Rosemary Kelly

Board Director

BComm, MPP, EdD, DipEd, MAICD

Special Responsibilities:

Member, Governance Committee

Member, People and Culture Committee

RWAV Team Members

The RWAV team is comprised of smart, capable and passionate individuals who care deeply about health equity and making a positive impact in rural communities.



RWAV Team at the Strategic Planning Day 2023

Solving the Rural Healthcare Challenge

Over the last 12 months, Victorian rural health professionals have proven yet again that they are a resilient, hardworking, dedicated and resourceful group of professionals. Despite managing the transition to COVID normal, funding constraints, new challenges and being exhausted and sometimes burnt out, healthcare professionals have continued to prioritise the health and wellbeing of their patients and clients and, at times, this was done at their own expense.

RWAV applauds and thanks healthcare workers across Australia for their commitment to their communities, especially those in rural locations. Without them many would not have access to the care they require.

For over 25 years, RWAV has been dedicated to solving the challenge of attracting and retaining a skilled health workforce in rural communities. This commitment requires forging partnerships, conducting data-driven research and gathering community insights. The shortage of healthcare professionals across disciplines has intensified in recent years, leaving some rural areas in Victoria without adequate access to vital healthcare providers. Recruitment barriers, including funding limitations, fragmented services and supervision shortages compound this issue.

A continuing challenge for health professionals in rural and regional areas is the lack of accessible professional development opportunities. Significant patient and client loads, and the considerable distances many practitioners travel for suitable CPD options hinders their capacity to stay current in their fields. Financial strain adds to this difficulty and can contribute to practices shutting their doors to new patients, which further curtails healthcare access.

In response, RWAV has tailored strategies to attract and keep healthcare professionals in rural locations. We worked on improving policies and funding collaborations between governments and organisations, and advocacy to streamline patient services and break down barriers, helping yield sustainable solutions.

RWAV has strategies in place to support professional growth and enhance healthcare access. Through strategic investments and collaborative efforts, a more robust and adaptable healthcare system can be developed, one that better serves the diverse needs of rural communities. Amid these complexities, RWAV remains dedicated to championing research, planning and action through partnerships to enhance rural healthcare services throughout Victoria.



The RWAV Approach

Throughout this year, RWAV's work focused on the three key pillars on which our organisation is based – Business Excellence, Service Development, and Engagement and Advocacy. These pillars have been instrumental in advancing our mission to apply contemporary workforce development strategies that advance rural, regional and Aboriginal Victorians' access to high-quality healthcare. This has helped achieve tangible impacts for health professionals in the communities they serve.

Business Excellence

This was evidenced through continuous improvements to our business continuity plans, improving our data management and seamlessly integrating web capabilities. Contract management was streamlined, and the alignment of our skills and our strategy was enhanced, driving ongoing improvements.

Service Development

We prioritised transparency by sharing workforce and service outcomes data, implementing robust learning and development plans, and taking measures to optimise the effectiveness of our grants.

Engagement and Advocacy

RWAV fostered collaboration by forging academic partnerships, promoting reconciliation, and engaging with government and peak bodies. We successfully administered the annual Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census, integrated quality measures into our outreach services and advocated to the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments on our policy positions. Furthermore, we provided essential funding support for professional development initiatives and actively sought out new opportunities to assume leadership roles.

These concerted efforts significantly bolstered our ability to support the rural health workforce.

Our Mission:

To apply contemporary workforce development strategies that advance rural, regional and Aboriginal Victorians' access to high-quality healthcare.

Our Vision:

Health equity for rural, regional and Aboriginal Victorians.

Our Values:

Collaboration is at the heart of how we work as an organisation and as a brand. This is our defining value. Our four supporting values define how we approach collaboration with each other, and with our partners to achieve our Mission and Vision.





The Victorian Rural Health Awards (VRHA) is a celebration, honouring the exceptional contributions by individuals and teams in rural healthcare. Each year the event brings together rural health professionals, stakeholders and supporters to acknowledge and promote excellence in rural healthcare.

Consultations with rural health professionals and community leaders paved the way for establishing clear criteria for the 10 categories of the 2023 VRHA. RWAV received a record number of 86 deserving nominations. There were 11 doctors in rural Victoria recognised for their length of service (35+ years), which is an outstanding achievement.

The Victorian Government sponsored the event, highlighting their commitment to rural and regional healthcare. The virtual event, held on 27 June, drew an impressive 35% increase in registrations, attracting 351 registrants. Participants were treated to a video message from Adjunct Professor Ruth Stewart, who is the National Rural Health Commissioner for Australia, and a showcase of past VRHA winners.

After the Awards ceremony, the video was shared with registered participants and the public.

Following the Awards, there was widespread media coverage in the localities of the Award winners, including published articles in Mountain Views Star Mail, North Central Review, Charles Sturt University, The Weekly Advertiser, ABC Online, Campaspe News, Cobram Courier, The Courier (Ballarat), Deniliquin Pastoral Times, Kyabram Free Press, Riverine Herald, The Shepparton Adviser, Shepparton News, Southern Riverina News, Sunraysia Daily and The Guardian (Swan Hill). This highlighted the level of interest and the value of the Awards.

The attendees expressed heartfelt gratitude for their recognition. The VRHA was successfully received as a platform for elevating the full spectrum of excellence in healthcare and uniting peers, teams and patients in their shared appreciation of outstanding contributions to rural health.



Outstanding Contribution by a Rising Star Award

RWAV proudly presents this award to

Dr Tanya Johnston

For the contribution and dedication to their rural community

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lauren".

Lauren Cordwell
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Rural Workforce Agency Victoria



HOSTED BY

SUPPORTED BY



The 2023 Victorian Rural Health Award Winners



Outstanding Contribution by a Rural Medical Specialist Award

A/Prof Rex Pais Prabhu
Swan Hill District Health, Swan Hill



Outstanding Contribution to Rural Outreach Provision Award

Dr Jennifer Collier
Consultant Cardiologist, Connected Cardiology, Shepparton



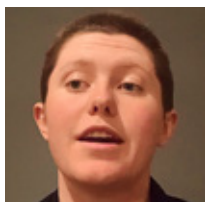
Outstanding Contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award

Dr Troy Walker
Nyini Health, A2B, ACC, Deakin & Monash Universities, Echuca



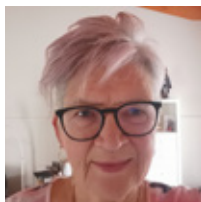
Outstanding Contribution to Rural Practice Management Award

Dianne Loubey
Practice Manager, Otway Medical Clinic, Colac



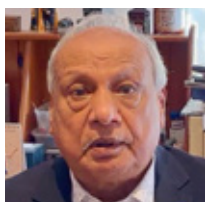
Outstanding Contribution by a Rising Star Award

Dr Tanya Johnston
Medical Intern, Grampians Health, Ballarat



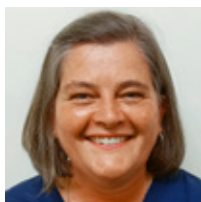
Outstanding Contribution by a Rural Health Consumer Advocate Award

Roslyn Stewart
Hume Mental Health Interim Regional Body, Broadford



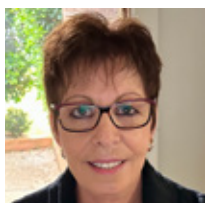
Outstanding Contribution by a Rural GP or Rural Generalist Award

Dr Suresh Jain
Kilmore Medical Centre, Kilmore



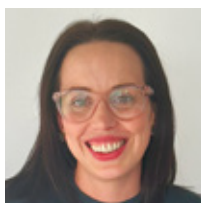
Outstanding Contribution to Rural Primary Care Nursing Award

Claire Oettinger
Get Well Clinic, Healesville



Outstanding Contribution by a Rural Health Team Award

Kathryn Lynch and the Sunraysia Medical Centre team
Red Cliffs



Outstanding Contribution to Rural Allied Health Award

Kara Di Dio
Kara Di Dio Speech Pathology, Traralgon

Length of Service Award Recipients for 35+ Years of Service

Dr Anne Porter
Whittlesea Medical Clinic, Whittlesea

Dr Cheryl Stanbury
Swan Hill Medical Group, Swan Hill

Dr Christian Fowler
Maldon Medical Centre, Maldon

Dr Eliot Jarman
Goulburn River Group Practice, Seymour

Dr Elizabeth Boyd
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-op, Bairnsdale

Dr Jill Ramsey
UFS Medical Centre, Bridge Mall in Ballarat

Dr John Dyson-Berry
Lime Medical Clinic, Mildura

Dr Myles Chapman
Macleod Street Medical Centre, Bairnsdale

Dr Phillip Steele
Federation Clinic, Wodonga

Dr Sally Carter
Romsey Medical Centre, Romsey

Dr Thomas Anderson
Ballarat Community Health, Smythesdale

Scan Here To Watch Now



<https://www.rwav.com.au/victorian-rural-health-awards-2023/>

Recruitment Solutions

While workforce shortages continue to increase demand for permanent GPs, RWAV remains committed to meeting the challenge. Our team consistently engaged with practices, community health and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to extend unwavering support to health professionals. Collaboratively working with stakeholders including Primary Health Networks (PHNs), we actively focused on recruiting for rural and regional areas.

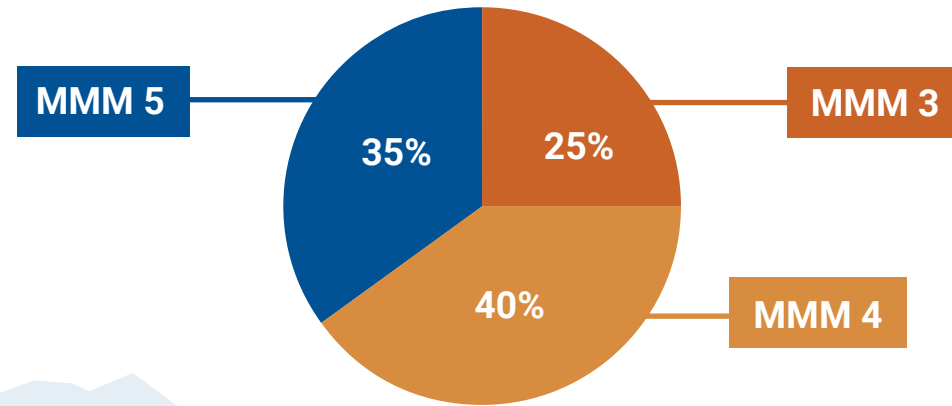
RWAV's recruitment programs offer comprehensive solutions to promote and support primary care opportunities in rural and regional Victoria. We provide many invaluable services for prospective candidates, granting access to extensive job opportunities. Employers benefit from a seamless, no-fee recruitment process.

Dedicated to candidates' success, we tailor our approach to individual skills, experiences, cultural considerations, family dynamics and career aspirations. We offer personalised career guidance, interview coaching, registration process support, workforce program insights and legislative advice. Additionally, we help acquire provider numbers for qualified doctors, and we extended relocation and retention incentives to ensure a smooth transition and enhanced staff retention. Our commitment continues post-placement through sustained engagement.

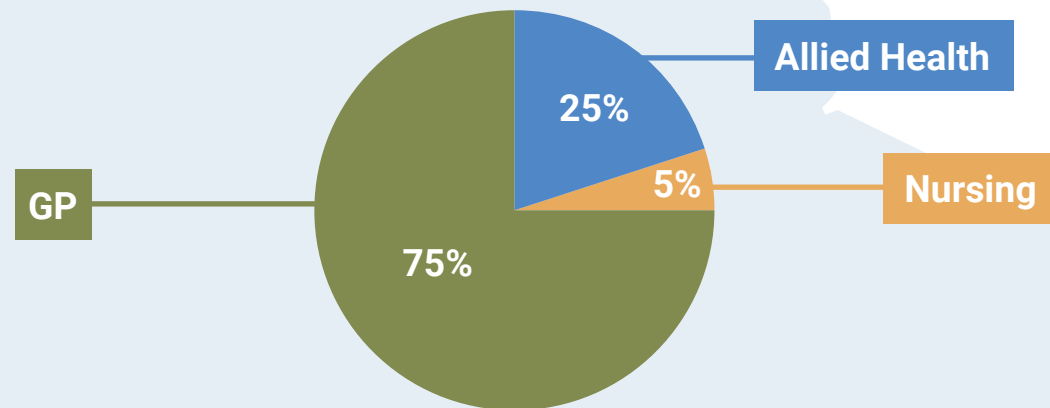
Over the financial year, RWAV effectively recruited 15 new doctors across various practices, with most placements in towns categorised as MMM4 and above in Victoria. Two GPs were appointed to ACCOs in January 2023.

Our strategy included the development of five-year guidelines to attract International Medical Graduates (IMGs) looking to reduce their moratorium, fruitful collaborations with government entities, active participation at conferences, job fairs and the establishment of valuable healthcare networks.

Placements by MMM Distribution



Permanent Recruitment Placements by Profession



Scan the QR Code for more information about RWAV's recruitment opportunities

www.rwav.com.au/health-professional-recruitment/

Recruitment Solutions

Rachel's story

Having completed my nurse practitioner studies in the Northern Territory, my husband and I had discussed moving back to Victoria to be closer to family.

I was contacted by RWAV to discuss my options. I had briefly seen on the RWAV recruitment page a role for a Locum GP in the rural Gippsland Lakes town of Loch Sport. I was informed by Sarah (from the RWAV Recruitment team) that she knew the practice manager for the Sale Medical Centre, and I asked if they would have the capacity or structure to support a nurse practitioner.

Within a few months, my husband and I were packing up our life in the Northern Territory and heading back to Victoria, and specifically back to where we had grown up. The RWAV team were very supportive and kept in contact regularly to ensure the relocation and settling-in had gone smoothly.

Moving back to Victoria, I fulfilled one reason I trained to be a nurse practitioner: to bring accessible primary healthcare to a rural community. The Loch Sport community has been very welcoming and encouraging. We enjoy the laid-back lifestyle, bush walks, ocean and lakes to fish, swim and play in.



Rachel, nurse practitioner

Healthcare Job Fair



RWAV's recruitment team attended many events where they highlighted recruitment opportunities for GPs, nurses and allied health professionals in rural and regional Victoria

In the 2022-2023 financial year, RWAV provided 10 relocation and retention incentives, totalling \$120,000, including the following professions:



Visas 4 GPs summary

Visas 4 GPs was a program that allowed employers of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) to obtain a Health Workforce Certificate (HWC). This certificate was part of a requirement for an IMG visa application.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, RWAV supported doctors and practices by assessing over 200 submissions for the visa application process.

Over 200
Visas 4 GP program
applications assessed



Connecting GP Locums to Health Services

In RWAV's pursuit of enhancing healthcare accessibility, our Specialist GP Locum Program operates through a blend of Commonwealth and Victorian Government funding. It is aimed at retaining rural doctors by providing essential locum relief for leave and workforce gaps, and supporting solo practices with a permanent locum model.

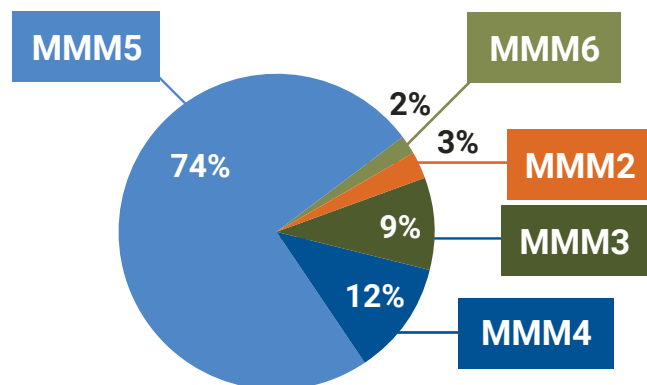
In the 2022-23 financial year, RWAV has strategically placed locums within general practices, community health services spanning the MMM2-6 range, and Aboriginal health services categorised under MMM1-6.

These placements also extended to visiting medical officer ward rounds at local hospitals and aged-care centres, including being on call for emergencies.

RWAV's Specialist GP Locum Program caters to:

- employed locums: engaged through casual contracts with benefits
- brokerage locums: independent GPs, directly choosing their assignments and invoice practices.

Number of GP Locums recruited to MMM Locations



Over the 2022-23 year, 50 GP locums were recruited to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in Victoria.

The comprehensive suite of services offered by RWAV includes no-fee end-to-end recruitment that encompasses administrative tasks, vacancy briefs, Medicare assistance and credentialing support. Additionally, we provide personalised career guidance, placement coordination, grants and ongoing support to ensure seamless transitions. The State-wide Locum Program and Locum Brokerage Packages respond to soaring demand. Our continued efforts serve to bridge healthcare gaps and provide vital support to practices and communities.

Katherine's story

"We've been utilising the RWAV Locum service for many years. We find the RWAV Locum Team always accommodates our requests in a timely manner, even at short notice. They are very easy to work with, personable, responsive and understanding of our clinic's needs. We are very fortunate to have locums, originally sourced through RWAV, who return to us repeatedly, and who are a welcome addition to our clinic team."

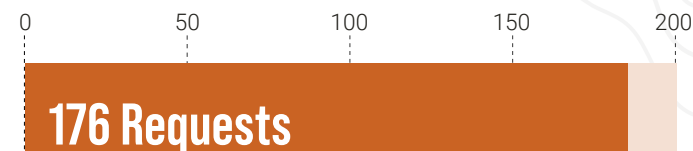
– Katherine, Practice Manager in Timboon

Total number of locum placements and sessions provided by the **Locum Brokerage Service** between 1 July 22 and 30 June 23:

194
PLACEMENTS
3,255
SESSIONS*

Total number of locum placements and sessions (4 hours) provided by the **RWAV Employed Locum Program** between 1 July 22 and 30 June 23:

53
PLACEMENTS
936
SESSIONS*



Total number of practices/ACCOs who **requested VMO and on-call services** between 1 July 22 and 30 June 23 = 176

113 Provisions

Total number of **locums providing VMO and after-hours services** between 1 July 22 and 30 June 23 = 113



Check out Dr Patrick's podcast on being an RWAV-employed GP locum here

* Each session equates to approximately 3.5 to 4 hours.

GP Programs

The More Doctors for Rural Australia Program (MDRAP)

The MDRAP enables non-vocationally registered doctors to gain rural practice experience before pursuing a college fellowship pathway to become a specialist GP. Many of the doctors on this program are IMGs.

In 2022-23 RWAV provided a high level of support to doctors on the MDRAP, including case management meetings, practice support meetings, learning and development meetings and an informative bi-monthly MDRAP e-newsletter keeping participants up to date with training and support opportunities, changes in legislation, and topical articles provided by our medical advisor and medical educator.

During the 2022-23 financial year, 86 MDRAP applications were approved and 49 doctors obtained placements on college pathways, training programs or achieved Fellowship. 74 doctors are on the MDRAP, as of 30 June 2023.

Hasan's Story

I respect RWAV's commitment to ensuring procedural fairness for all applicants and participants in the program, as outlined in the MDRAP guidelines.

Thank you for keeping me updated on the progress of my application. I am thrilled to hear that my Provider number application will be issued to the department within the next 24 hours. I am looking forward to commencing my work with the program, and I am grateful for all your help and support.

- Hasan

MDRAP Webinar Series

During the year, GP Programs conducted three informative webinars.

1. In March 2023, RWAV's Medical Advisor Dr Kathy Kirkpatrick, led the first webinar offering insights on optimising doctors' time on the MDRAP, and supporting doctors to have a deeper understanding of the program.
2. In April 2023, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) joined RWAV to discuss their college pathways. MDRAP doctors gained clarity on application processes, costs and pathway specifics.
3. In June 2023, the Remote Vocational Training Scheme Ltd (RVTS) presented their training program, empowering MDRAP doctors to make informed choices.

The 5 Year International Medical Graduate (IMG) Recruitment Scheme

The 5 Year IMG Recruitment Scheme (previously known as the 5 Year Overseas Trained Doctor (OTD) Scheme) attracts experienced GPs to remote areas, aiding eligible IMGs and Foreign Graduates of Accredited Medical Schools (FGAMS) to take up rural positions. It aims to alleviate GP shortages in underserved regions.

In 2022-23 the scheme resulted in 4 applications with 3 eligible doctors who were enrolled in the Scheme.



Responding to the Urgent Need for Allied Health

Allied Health Position Paper

Allied health practitioners and allied health care play a pivotal role in the healthcare of rural communities across Victoria.

RWAV has worked with and supported the allied health sector over many years, understanding and recognising the importance of, and the urgent need for allied health in rural Victoria.

Barriers in the social, professional and infrastructure spheres, underrepresentation in decision-making and a lack of recognition are just a few systemic issues facing the industry.

The RWAV Allied Health Position Paper underpins RWAV's vision of contemporary workforce development strategies that advance rural, regional, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples access to high-quality healthcare.

We remain committed to supporting and fostering the positions outlined through increased workforce support and resources.

Rural Allied Health New Service Grant

The Rural Allied Health New Service Grant offers up to \$10,000 in funding to establish or expand allied health services in areas MMM3-6.

In the 2022-23 financial year, 49 applications were received, totalling over \$520,000 in grant requests. Eight recipients were chosen across psychology, speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and dietetics.

This selection is expected to result in the creation of four new services and the expansion of four existing services, potentially delivering an extra 330 patient appointments per week and an increase of over nine full-time equivalent (FTE) clinical staff.

RWAV also continues to support previous grant recipients.

As a result of receiving the funding from the New Service Grant, One Red Tree Resource Centre can now facilitate an additional 50 new 'in clinic' and 110 'in school' patient sessions per week. It also supported 11 psychology placements (0.4 FTE) per semester, two psychology registrars (0.75 FTE), one psychologist (0.8 FTE) and one psychology intern (1 FTE).



A cohort of provisional psychologists completing placement with One Red Tree Resource Centre in Ararat, a psychology service RWAV supported with clinical room fit out via the Rural Allied Health New Service Grant.



Senior Clinician Psychologist U'Nita Harold, with her AAT dog Louie, and Provisional Psychologist, Shane duPreez

Promising Evaluation Results

RWAV commissioned an external review of the Rural Allied Health New Service Grant, to ensure this targeted funding opportunity was having a real impact on the local service and communities. The evaluation results were very positive, including the following finding: "The Grant has led to improved access to and the quality of allied health services in regional areas in Victoria."

Allied Health Assistant Grant

The Allied Health Assistant Grant was launched by RWAV after recognising a gap in the support landscape.

Allied Health Assistants (AHAs) are certificate-trained healthcare workers operating under the supervision of allied health practitioners. They aid in efficient resource allocation, improve patient care continuity, ensure treatment plan adherence and offer valuable insights for tailored assessments.

The grant, providing up to \$3,000 per student per course, assists practices in professionally developing prospective allied health assistants to complete training and certification for those who are ineligible for government subsidies. The grant has so far supported three allied health assistants across various disciplines.



Scan here to read
the Allied Health
Position Paper

www.rwav.com.au/recognising-the-value-of-rural-allied-health/

For more information on our Allied Health Stakeholder Group refer to page 23.

Zoe's story

"This grant has made a huge difference in the sustainability of my practice, and the families (attending my practice) appear satisfied with receiving these services in their homes in rural and sometimes isolated locations."

– Zoe Lowe, Speech Pathologist

Tammie's story

"The New Service Grant has allowed us to put together our clinic to make it welcoming and inviting for clients to come in for support. The grant has taken a burden off us because we are a small organisation and it would be otherwise difficult to fund [a room fit-out]." – Tammie Meehan, Education and Operations Director, One Red Tree Resource Centre

The Future of Rural and Regional Healthcare

Rural Ambassadors

RWAV's Rural Ambassador Program and Grant aims to drive secondary and tertiary students towards a career in rural healthcare. University students, who are designated ambassadors, represent RWAV at career expos, conferences and rural health-focused events across Victoria, supporting rural health careers.

Jordan's reflections

"I enjoyed hearing from the three inspiring rural doctors, each with unique and engaging stories. Their passion and generosity in sharing their experience motivated me to pursue a career as a rural generalist. The diversity of cases, lifestyle and flexibility resonated with me. This was a one-of-a-kind getaway, and I am so grateful to have met so many brilliant minds through all the fun and hands-on activities!"
– Jordan, University Student

Dr JuMP

Dr JuMP is a coordinated medical mentoring initiative that helps to foster mentoring connections to bolster training and professional advancement. Medical students, junior doctors, clinicians, GPs and other specialists who are based in rural and regional Victoria, or have an interest in working there, can join Dr JuMP as a mentor or mentee. Recognising its crucial role in rural and regional medical mentoring, the Department of Health has extended its support with a grant of \$50,000 to expand the program. RWAV serves as the auspicing agency for Dr JuMP.

Emma's reflections

"I was struggling to find someone to talk to about the realities and day-to-day life rural doctors experienced and really wanted to find out more. Dr JuMP has absolutely been pivotal in working towards this goal and has exceeded my expectations!"
– Emma

Highlights from the RWAV Future Workforce program

- Enabled 13 students to participate in Monash University's Rural Training Pathways Congress in Mildura, supporting regional medical pathways.
- Collaborated with the General Practice Student Network to orchestrate a Gippsland Farm Stay weekend, attracting 37 students nationwide. RWAV showcased insights of a locum doctor, catalysing enthusiasm for rural GP careers.
- Sponsored the Inspiring Careers in Health Camp by the Baw Baw Local Learning & Employment Network (LLEN), engaging over 70 local school students in Gippsland to explore health sector vocations, featuring RWAV's Rural Ambassador, Medical Student Emma Gunn.

"We know that there is currently, and will be into the future, strong interest for people to work in the health sector across a variety of roles, which is what we wanted to nurture."
– Lisa Price, Organiser, LLEN Health Camp
(Gippsland Times, 2023)

Future Workforce Grants

These grants are aimed at supporting positive rural experiences, assisting students along their health career pathways and supporting events centred around rural health throughout Victoria. Over 280 grants were disbursed, exceeding \$129,000.

280+
Grants



\$129,000
in funding

Felicity's story

"I absolutely loved my nursing placement in Warrnambool! I saw so many varied clinical presentations in my placement that I wouldn't have seen on a metro placement. I'm now very interested in moving to a rural town for my grad year!"
– Felicity, Warrnambool Placement Student

Peter's story

"It was one of the best experiences of my life! I fell in love with the town and the people I shared the experience with. The hands-on experience that was availed to me at the hospital was also unparalleled, and I felt extremely supported throughout."
– Peter, Bendigo Placement Student



Two Medical Students promoting the RWAV Future Workforce program

RWAV Grants and Incentives

A range of RWAV grants was offered to various professionals within the medical, nursing and allied health domains, as well as practice managers, practice staff and aspiring students seeking a future in rural healthcare in Victoria.

The Government-funded grants administered by RWAV are designed to:

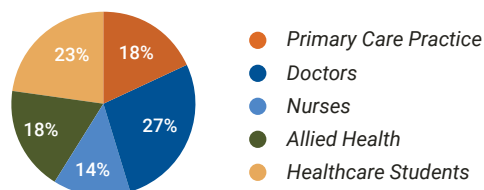
- support clinical upskilling, professional development and postgraduate education
- facilitate new and expanding businesses
- encourage and inspire secondary and tertiary students to consider rural and regional healthcare pathways.

Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP)

HWSP is the largest grant, supporting professional development, upskilling activities and postgraduate qualifications.

This year in Victoria, the grant supported almost 800 successful applications with nearly 700 of those applicants continuing to work rurally. 35 healthcare providers were supported in undertaking postgraduate upskilling through the HWSP scholarship.

Distribution of Grants Offered



The Medical Professional Development Program (MPD)

MPD advances medical professionals' proficiency and clinical skills. Following the Department of Health guidelines, RWAV managed the program, assessing applications and grant disbursements.

The grant increased in value from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per applicant, substantially aiding eligible health professionals this financial year.

Grants Offered

Health Workforce Scholarship Program - Bursary	● ● ●
Health Workforce Scholarship Program - Scholarship	● ● ●
Health Workforce Scholarship Program - Locums	●
Medical Professional Development Program	●
Reconciliation Action Plan Grant	●
Rural Practice Training Grant	●
General Practice Quality Accreditation Grant	●
Prospective GP Locum Grant	●
Allied Health and Nursing Education Grant	● ●
Rural Allied Health New Service Grant	●
Allied Health Assistant Grant	●
Rural Clinical Psychology Placement Grant	●
Rural Ambassador Leadership Grant	●
Rural Clinical Placement Grant	●
UCAT Preparation Grant	●
Workforce Incentive Program	●

Stephanie's feedback

"Fantastic opportunity for inter- and intra-professional collaboration, and an opportunity to discuss with other rural/regional practitioners what is and is not working for them. I was also able to update myself in the areas of renal and hepatic testing, and also medication management in the ID space."

– Stephanie, Pharmacist

Greg's feedback

"I've learnt chiropractic techniques and completed exams specifically relating to paediatric patients as well as the neurology and anatomy of infants, with a focus on home care that can empower parents to help take control."

– Greg, Chiropractor

Lee's feedback

"I feel more confident in forming comprehensive treatment plans for my patients that commonly come with complex presentations."

– Lee, Dentist

Anastasia's feedback

"I do more thorough health assessments and care plans. Book patients in for follow-up appointments more often. Better health outcomes for patients. My knowledge base is increased so beneficial to patients and my employer. Have become more confident in my role. Increased screening."

Financial benefit to practice."

– Anastasia, Registered Nurse

Grants Approved 2022 - 2023 Financial Year

~800

Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP)
Doctors, nurses and allied health

35

Allied Health and Nursing Education Grant
Allied health and nurses

29

RWAV Rural Ambassador Student Grant
Student

183

Medical Professional Development Program (MPD)
Doctors

7

UCAT Exam Preparation Grant
Student

235

RWAV Rural Clinical Placement Grant
Student

RWAV Grants and Incentives

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Grant

RWAV's RAP Grant supported rural Victoria's general practices, allied health and primary care services to facilitate impactful endeavours such as fostering culturally safe practices through collaborations with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, enlisting advisers for RAP development and Welcome to Country ceremonies, and commissioning artworks and signage to enrich practice environments.

Cultural Safety Training

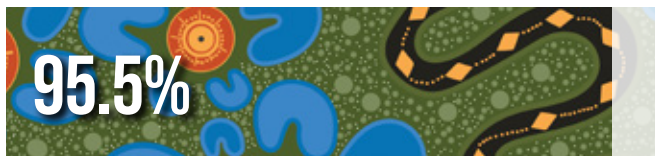
RWAV and VACCHO have partnered to provide Cultural Safety Training Workshops online to educate primary healthcare providers and support staff in MMM3-7 or MMM1-7 locations if working in an Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or ACCHO, and are led by knowledgeable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators.

Participants' most valuable learnings from the training:

The activity held **personal importance**



The activity held **professional importance**



Jenny's feedback

"Feeling reassured that I am practising in a culturally safe manner."

– Jenny

Raj's feedback

"I now understand the story behind Aboriginal health-related data."

– Raj

Mark's feedback

"Aboriginal identity and the video really moved me and a strong message on terminology was really useful."

– Mark



Grants Week

In February 2023, RWAV held Grants Week, a dedicated event spotlighting the diverse grants managed by RWAV. The week comprised three online webinars tailored for doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and practice managers. Each webinar provided comprehensive insights into grants pertinent to the respective audience, followed by a Q&A segment.

The Grants Week garnered 473 registrations and was instrumental in bringing valuable grant-related information directly to the intended beneficiaries, setting a positive precedent for the future.

The webinars generated lots of questions, and participants were very engaged and keen to learn more about the grants available to them.

Top five most popular categories for grants:

1. Exam preparation (medical practitioners only)
2. Sexual/pelvic health
3. Skin cancer/dermatology/dermoscopy
4. Aboriginal health
5. Emergency skills

Grants Approved 2022 - 2023 Financial Year

9 RWAV Rural Clinical Psychology Grant
Student

3 Allied Health Assistant Grant
Allied health

3 Prospective GP Locum Grant
GP Locum

26 Rural Practice Training Grant
General practice

8 Allied Health New Service Grant
Allied health

2 General Practice Quality Accreditation Grant
General practice

The Mental Health Initiative

In response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, RWAV partnered with the Victorian Department of Health to oversee the Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives program.

This 4-year program supports the mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) workforce in state-funded services across rural and regional Victoria. This is achieved by relocation, retention and attraction of mental health professionals to pivotal roles, including facilitating individuals and their families to acclimatise to these communities.

The Regional Mental Health Workforce Incentives program offers candidates up to \$20,000 to facilitate their move to rural Victoria. The program goes beyond monetary aid through integration support for workers and their families. It includes local community navigators guiding candidates from pre-employment to relocation and their settling-in process.

Collaborating closely with Area Mental Health Services, RWAV is actively addressing the scarcity of mental health professionals in rural areas.

The program allocated over \$1.2 million in funding during the 2022-23 financial year to support the placement of more than 60 mental health professionals across the state, thereby alleviating critical shortages.

Chris' story.

Relocating from New Zealand to Traralgon.

"Kylie was able to assist me with securing a beautiful 4-bedroom home super fast, and now I am living here (in Traralgon) very happily. Kylie answered my emails quickly, met me at the train station and drove me around town. I felt like I had known her for years and she was part of the family. I have never felt so supported before when starting a new role, Kylie's support and kindness were so helpful in the move away from family and home. This service is invaluable for international staff moving to Victoria."

– Chris

Rima's story

"Since the day I got accepted for the position, Kylie made every effort to make the process as convenient as possible. She always made time to explain the facilities available. Kylie remained constantly in contact with me and ensured everything was organised in time before my arrival, even at short notice. She connected me to RWAV, which kindly approved the support on time. I hope RWAV will continue providing such programs and support so that more graduates can benefit from it."

– Rima

\$1.2mil funding
2022-23 financial year

Up to
\$20,000
per incentive

Supporting
60
mental health professionals

Outreach Programs Providing Much Needed Health Services to Communities

RWAV delivers outreach programs to ensure optimal primary healthcare access for all individuals in rural Victoria. These initiatives involve healthcare practitioners travelling to rural areas to provide medical services to communities lacking conventional access.

RWAV currently operates over 300 outreach services, extending specialised healthcare and wellbeing support to Victoria's rural, regional, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

These programs alleviate financial barriers for health professionals by covering travel expenses, accommodation, meals, room hire and administrative support.

A wide range of vital services were delivered through these programs, including:



Our dedicated healthcare professionals completed 3,273 outreach visits to a substantial 45,851 patients across regional and rural Victoria.

These initiatives encompassed 56 services offered through both face-to-face consultations and telehealth.

RWAV Administered the Following Outreach Programs:

Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF)



Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program (MOICDP)



Healthy Ears – Better Hearing Better Listening Program (HEBHBL)



Ear Health Coordination



Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS)



Eye and Ear Surgical Support (EESS)



Coordination of Indigenous Eye Health (CIEH)



Ear and Hearing Follow-up



The EESS program breaking down barriers to eye and ear health care

The program addresses access challenges faced by rural areas such as Njernda Aboriginal Corporation in Echuca, situated 200 km north of Melbourne, by expediting surgical interventions for conditions including cataracts and ear infections.

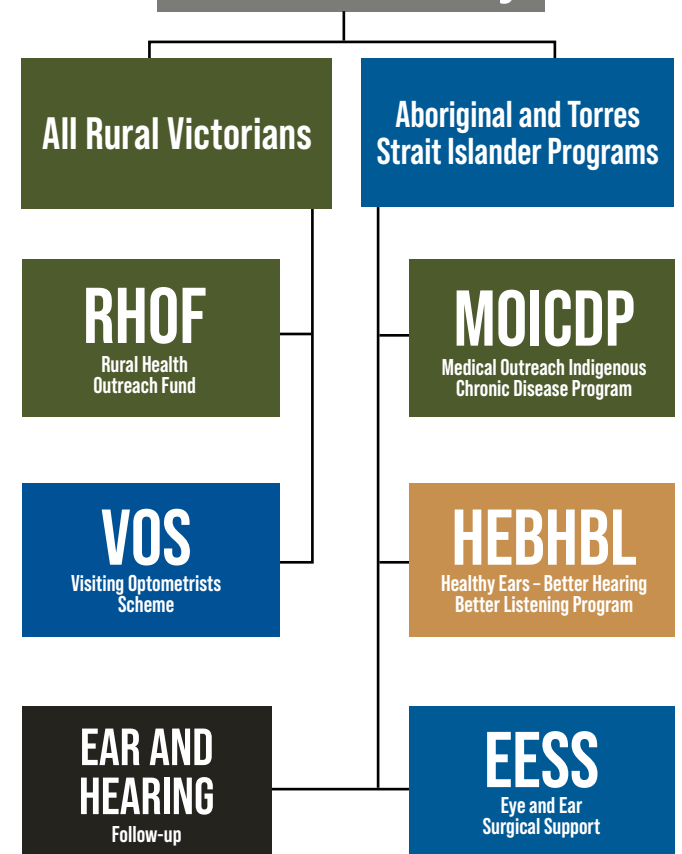
Neither children nor adults in Echuca have access to affordable public eye and ear surgery within recommended timelines. ACCHOs have struggled with limited access to surgical pathways, facing public waiting lists for over a year.

RWAV proposed a solution to the Department of Health to combat this, securing private surgery funding until June 2024. With this initiative, timely surgeries are now possible without special arrangements, bridging the gap left by the lack of public pathways.

“It has been challenging, especially with the changes to the service delivery standards, which has been a big barrier. However, we have worked through this together, as it is more flexible and more kids are being seen for surgery.”
– The Aboriginal Health Worker at Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

Program Overview

Service Delivery



Reflecting on our RAP Achievements

Throughout 2022-23, RWAV's Reflect RAP established a solid foundation for reconciliation efforts, fostering sustainable, strategic and meaningful actions. The Innovate RAP spans two years and is well underway. It will further bolster relationships, respect and opportunities, increasing equity and supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Internally, initiatives included learning experiences and participation in NAIDOC Week (National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee) and National Reconciliation Week.

Externally, RWAV strengthened ties and supported Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) in Victoria, promoting healthcare access.

RWAV facilitated the delivery of Cultural Safety Training in partnership with VACCHO, and the RAP Grant to Victoria's healthcare services. Refer to page 19.

We thank our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community partners for generously sharing their experiences and warmly welcoming us to walk with them.

Some of the multifaceted efforts by RWAV driving us through our journey towards reconciliation.

- In collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc, RWAV assisted in packing and distributing aid boxes to communities impacted by floods in Seymour and Bendigo.
- Notably, RWAV's then Acting CEO, Lauren Cordwell, and Jo Willatts, Senior Manager of the Healthcare Access team, convened discussions with Jill Gallagher, CEO of Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Abe Ropitini, Executive Director of Population Health VACCHO. These meetings were instrumental in shaping innovative strategies aimed at driving RWAV's initiatives forward.
- Additionally, we remain dedicated to fostering cultural understanding and inclusivity, as demonstrated by RWAV's participation in smoking and flag raising ceremonies during National Reconciliation Week.



An experienced Koorie guide took the RWAV team down the Birrarung Wilam (River Camp) Walk through Federation Square and down to the Birrarung Wilam (Common Ground) Aboriginal art installations.



RWAV's participation in the flag raising ceremony during National Reconciliation Week.



ARTIST: Madison Connors

"My identity is what drives me. It's something that is within me and comes from the heart. My connection to my environmental surroundings is my bloodline and vein to this country and the community, which runs deep within. I come from a strong line of women and am following in their footsteps; I aim to embody their full form on this earth and strive to make my mob proud of the work that I create and achieve." – Madison Connors

RWAV commissioned the talented artist Madison Connors to create an inspiring artwork that captures the heart and embodies the essence of RWAV's engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Victoria.

Madison Connors is a proud Yorta Yorta (Wolthica clan), Dja Dja Wurrung (Moomnom Gunditj Bee clan) and Gamilaroi woman. She was born and grew up on her Kannygoopna (Shepparton) meaning the place in the river where big fish are caught. Madison is an artist, a human rights advocate and a mother of two. Her business, Yarli Creative, is a coming together of her yarka (children), her yakapna (family) and her mulana (spirit).

RWAV's Engagement Activities

Allied Health Stakeholder Group

Comprised of stakeholders from various sectors, such as primary health networks, peak bodies and rural practitioners, the Allied Health Stakeholder Group convenes quarterly to harness insights and experiences for strategic planning, problem-solving and enhancing RWAV's support for rural allied health services in Victoria.

Led by a rotating practitioner member chair, recent discussions covered RWAV's allied health initiatives, workforce data analysis, broader sector programs such as the Workforce Incentives Program, issue-solving strategies and resource development for rural health practitioners.

Nhill Service Access Round Table

On 28 March 2023, a collaboration among health professionals, organisations, the local council and the community took place at the Nhill Service Access Round Table, facilitated by RWAV.



On 28 March 2023, healthcare professionals, local council, community members and organisations gathered at the Nhill Community Centre for a half-day workshop at the Nhill Service Access Round Table.

Nhill has a population of 2,500, including 270 Karen refugees. Nhill and its surrounding regions face a pressing challenge in recruiting and retaining doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to the region.

The workshop tackled recruitment issues. Critical shortages in mental health services and geriatricians further amplify the healthcare gaps.

Proposed solutions included exploring MBS billing optimisation, partnership funding for recruitment, facilitated health assessments for the Karen community, and provisions for rural GPs' leave through funded locum support.

These initiatives are being actively pursued by attendees, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Victoria, Hindmarsh Shire Council, West Wimmera Health, Rural Doctors Nhill Medical Centre, Alliance Pharmacy Nhill, Nhill Neighbourhood Learning Centre, the Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative and RWAV.



RWAV's team members Lauren Cordwell, (former) GM of Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement and Kate Temby, Senior Manager Health Workforce Development, visited an inspiring social enterprise in Nhill, aimed at supporting Karen women who have been displaced from their homes and are now living in the local area.

Health Workforce Stakeholder Group

The Health Workforce Stakeholder Group (HWSG) is a group of over 50 members that RWAV consults with numerous times throughout the year. The members include rural health services, rural PHNs, rural clinical schools and peak bodies. These consultations help shape the priorities for the Rural Health Workforce Support Activity (RHWSA) Program. The program aims to address health workforce shortages and maldistribution in rural areas of Australia through strategic workforce planning.

Key activities of RWAV, including recruitment, retention, and workforce support, are primarily funded through the RHWSA Program. The HWSG forums serve as the platform where members are consulted on health workforce challenges based on data from RWAV's Rural Health Workforce Census and Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWSNA). These discussions guide RWAV's activities for the next financial year. RWAV appreciates all HWSG members' contributions to better identify and address health workforce issues across rural Victoria in the coming year. It welcomes feedback, advice, and experiences from all members.

Through your dedication, we've been able to shed light on the unique challenges faced by our healthcare workforce, and more importantly, we've taken concrete steps towards overcoming these challenges. Thank you, HWSG members, for being a driving force behind our collective mission to improve healthcare in rural Victoria.

Registrar Training Research Project

Enhancing rural registrar training for improved sustainability

RWAV has received first-time funding for a research study which aims to understand the effects of individualised enhanced training opportunities on retaining registrars, engaging and supporting supervisors, and filling registrar clinical experience gaps. The study, known as the Registrar Training Project, is funded by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Education Research Grant. The 12-month study is being delivered in partnership with Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) and Charles Sturt University (CSU), with RWAV as the lead agency.

Associate Professor Rex Prabhu said SHDH has been on an exciting workforce development journey. This was the result of efforts from senior doctors and training supervisors and collaboration with partners such as RWAV, CSU and the Department of Health Rural Generalist Division. SHDH's GPs have tripled over the past four years, and it continues to offer ongoing training and development opportunities to all GPs, including innovative training pathways for rural generalists seeking specialised skills.

Innovation Project

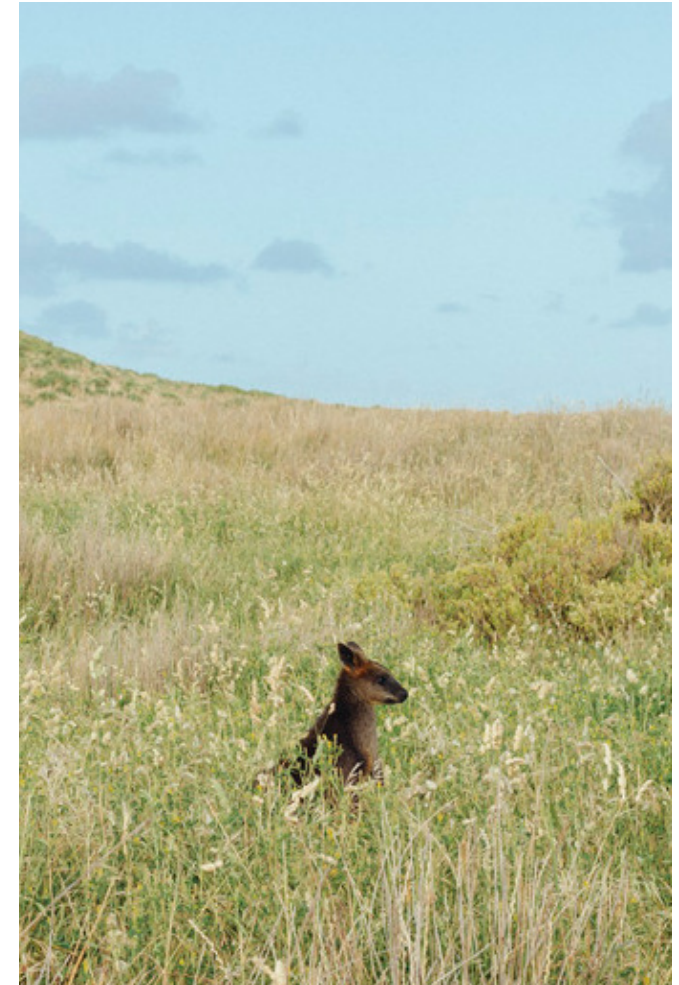
Rural Link and Learn

Funded by the Rural Health Workforce Australia Innovative Practice Grant, the Rural Link and Learn initiative is a new program by RWAV, aimed at combating professional isolation among rural allied health practitioners in Victoria. The project delivers nine immersive training and networking events in regional centres, targeting:

- speech pathologists
- psychologists
- occupational therapists

The Rural Allied Health Primary Care Solutions Forum and the Open Consultation Survey identified the need for local training and networking. A further survey of allied health practitioners found 97% of respondents highlighted the need for more local training opportunities.

RWAV aims to enhance healthcare quality, increase access to professional development and networking opportunities, foster sustainability and promote innovation in rural health services. We look forward to delivering these training events in the coming year.



A/Prof Rex Prabhu (SDHU), Dr Dan Wilson (RDAV), project participants and the RWAV Education Research Grant team



Rural Link and Learn Speech Pathology, Horsham

Other Key Events and Stakeholder Partnerships

During the 2022-23 financial year, RWAV actively collaborated with numerous stakeholders, peak bodies and organisations across all tiers of government to provide comprehensive backing for healthcare professionals and communities.

Some of the many stakeholders that RWAV collaborated with over the financial year

- Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, Aboriginal Medical Services and cooperatives
- Flood-affected communities across Victoria
- Primary Health Networks
- Universities and rural health schools
- State and federal governments
- Practices and clinics
- Medical, nursing and allied health professionals
- District Health Services and Community Health Services
- Learning hubs and students
- Peak bodies.

Distribution Priority Area (DPA)

Distribution Priority Area (DPA) is a system that identifies areas with lower levels of GP services, compared with a benchmark level. Initiatives that aim to increase the supply of GPs are then implemented in these areas.

GP practices are able to submit a review of their GP Catchment to gain the status of DPA if there are exceptional circumstances in the catchment.

RWAV is the conduit between the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Distribution Working Group and provides initial assessment before the application is passed forward.

In the 2022-23 financial year, RWAV discussed the application process with over 30 practices.



More about the review process can be found here:

www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/dpa/request-review



RWAV visits the Western Victoria PHN.



RWAV visits the Royal Flying Doctors Service in Victoria



RWAV CEO and PHN CEOs meet the Victorian Minister for Health The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census and the Health Workforce Needs Assessment

Every year, RWAV completes the Victoria Rural Health Workforce Needs Assessment, also known as the Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census, with outstanding support from healthcare professionals across rural Victoria.

The purpose of the Census is to gather data to inform decision-making, enhance healthcare and increase access for rural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Victoria.

The Census offers the opportunity for all rural health professionals to have their say and let us know the current level of service provision, the gaps and unmet needs in rural Victoria.

These findings help define short- and long-term rural health workforce needs, gauge health professionals' intentions for upskilling, identify training needs, and devise sustainable solutions to address the health workforce challenges in rural areas and among Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Most importantly, RWAV uses this data to inform its support activities and advocacy efforts, and to deliver pivotal resources to areas in greatest need.

Together, we can build a stronger and more resilient healthcare system that caters to the unique needs of rural and underserved communities.

Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) remains a critical issue for rural and regional health professionals. Challenges stem from various factors, including limited clinic capacity and the distance health practitioners often travel to access suitable CPD opportunities, making it challenging to stay up to date with the latest advancements in their fields. This hinders the delivery of quality care to patients.

Top 5 skills that GPs want to upskill in over the next 6–12 months

1. Dermatology
2. Emergency Medicine
3. Mental Health
4. Maternal Health and OB/GYN
5. Palliative Care

Top 5 skills that Allied Health Professionals want to upskill in over the next 6–12 months

1. Mental Health
2. Paediatrics
3. Chronic Disease Management
4. Management/leadership skills
5. Emergency Medicine

Top 10 occupation needs in rural Victoria (RWAV, 2022)

1. General Practitioner
2. Nurse
3. Mental Health Practitioner (Psychologist, Psychiatrist)
4. Occupational Therapist
5. Physiotherapist
6. Social worker
7. Paediatrician
8. Podiatrist
9. Speech Pathologist
10. Counsellor



RWAV. (2022). Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census. Victoria: RWAV.

Number of rural health professionals who participated in the Victorian RHW Census:

500

Health professionals who attended cultural safety training in the past three years:

>58%

Health professionals planning on retiring over the next five years:

>21%

Average appointment lengths for GPs:

11-20 mins

Average appointment lengths for allied health practitioners:

31-60 mins

51.61% of professionals have seen at least a

+10% increase in patient load.

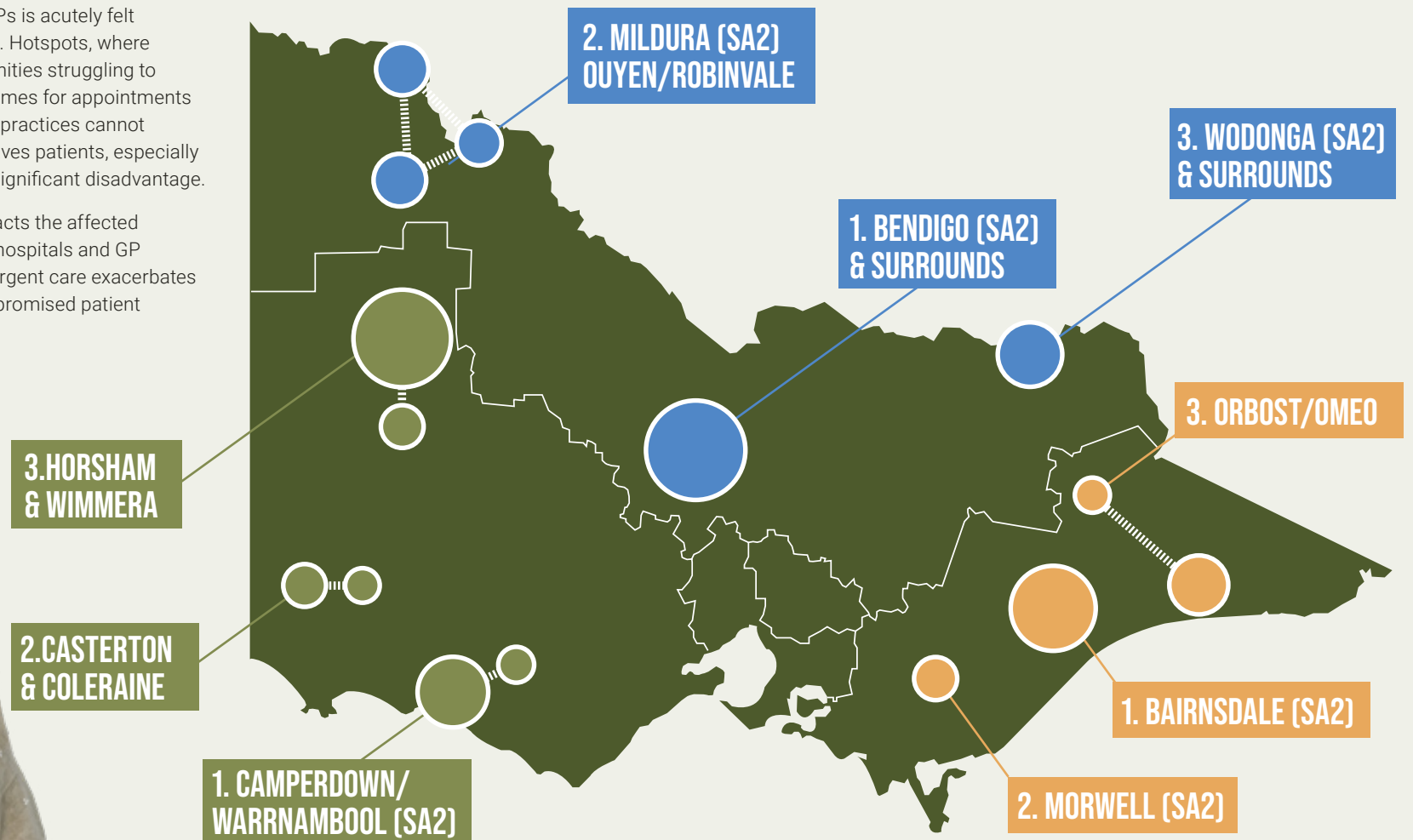
23.13% of professionals have seen at least a

+30% increase in patient load.

Top 9 Hotspots Where we Urgently Need More Permanent GPs

The urgent need for more permanent GPs is acutely felt across Victoria's rural and remote areas. Hotspots, where critical shortages persist, leave communities struggling to access quality primary care. With wait times for appointments stretching out to weeks or longer, many practices cannot accommodate new patients and this leaves patients, especially those without the means to travel, at a significant disadvantage.

This disparity in healthcare access impacts the affected communities and strains neighbouring hospitals and GP practices. A decline in emergency and urgent care exacerbates the situation, leading to potentially compromised patient outcomes.



This map identifies the top 9 workforce shortage hot spots as identified by the three rural Primary Health Networks, who were invited to identify their top three.

Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) – represents a community. These areas represent suburbs within cities or catchments of rural towns. Their purpose is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically.

- Western Victoria PHN
- Murray PHN
- Gippsland PHN

Partnerships and Collaborations

VACCHO State-wide GP Gathering

RWAV proudly supported the second VACCHO state-wide GP Gathering in May 2023 in Healesville. The gathering delivered a unique blend of cultural and clinical education with peer support and professional development. RWAV provided financial support to **27 doctors** through the Health Workforce Scholarship Program on behalf of each eligible participating doctor.



Amanda Hand, CEO of Oonah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, Dr Hung The Nguyen, Kerina Princi, RWAV

Katherine's feedback

"I was just starting into GP training as a FSP registrar when I attended the weekend workshop by RWAV. I found the sessions really useful, practical and rational. I really appreciated the enthusiasm and energy of all the presenters and the efforts of GPRA and RWAV in putting together topics which are very useful to everyone in any stage of their GP training. Tips and advice shared was very informative and I started my GP training with a lot of practical knowledge which I would have never known if not for the workshop. And to add to this all I built connections with the other participants to help me along my journey!"

– Katherine, Registrar



The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc GP Gathering.

GPRA General Practice Registrars Australia

GPRA and RWAV collaborated for the first time in June when RWAV supported the GP Registrar Support and Networking Workshop in Bendigo. RWAV provided financial support by accessing the Medical Professional Development Grant funds on behalf of each eligible doctor. The workshop was attended by 18 registrars.



RWAV's Acting CEO, Lauren Cordwell; RWAV Board Director and GP Obstetrician, Dr Louise Manning; and Joanne Chapman, CEO, GPRA at the GP Registrar Support and Networking Workshop in Bendigo.

Partnerships and Collaborations

RACGP's Rural Online Focused Psychological Strategies Skills Training

RWAV collaborated with the RACGP to support doctors upskilling in mental health. RWAV supported participating and eligible doctors to access the Health Workforce Scholarship Program.

The RACGP's Rural Online Focused Psychological Strategies Skills Training (FPSST) package provided GPs with essential training that enabled them to become a GP provider of Focused Psychological Strategies (FPS), and to provide cognitive behavioural therapy-derived counselling to patients in their practice.

This flexible, fully online and accredited training package uses technology, peer learning groups and locally available resources to provide GPs with access to complete all the requirements of FPSST without leaving their home or practice.

Nearly 150 doctors successfully completed this online learning course.



The Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) workshop ACRRM team and their mannequins

ACRRM Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) Workshop

RWAV facilitated the Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) workshop delivered by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) team on 25–26 March in Bendigo for the More Doctors for Rural Australia Program (MDRAP) doctors.

The workshop was a very beneficial course for rural doctors as it enables rural GPs to enhance and broaden their emergency medicine clinical skills, and gives GPs the confidence required to manage emergencies in their rural community.

Twelve doctors on MDRAP and two of their supervising doctors completed the course through funding from the MDRAP Support Package and the Health Workforce Scholarship Program respectively.

Manjula's story

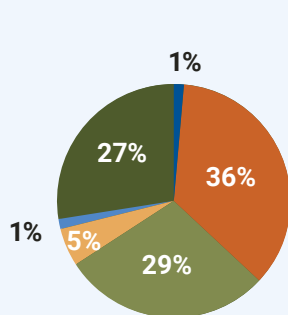
"This program was excellent exposure to rural emergency skills and was a very comprehensive programme. I highly recommend this program particularly for doctors who work rurally."

- Manjula

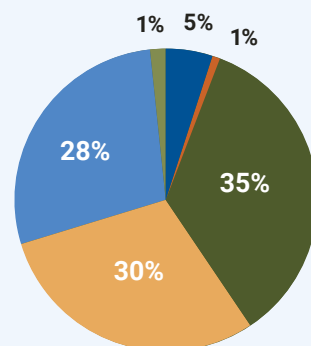
FPSST GP Distributions

By PHN

PHN	Number of GPs
South-East Melbourne	2
Eastern Melbourne	2
North-western Melbourne	7
Western Victoria	37
Murray	39
Gippsland	48



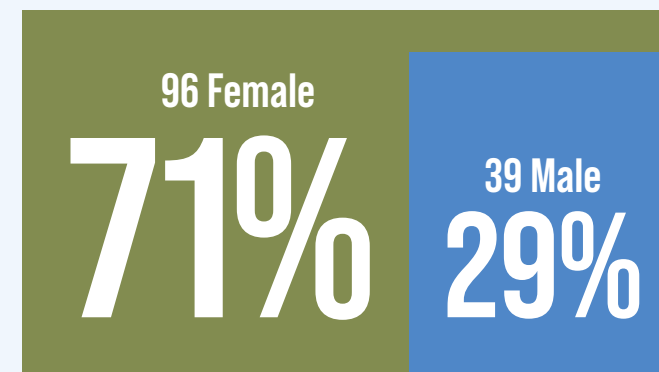
By MMM* Locations



Number of GPs

ACCHO1 MMM1	7
ACCHO2 MMM2	1
MMM3	47
MMM4	40
MMM5	38
MMM6	2

By Gender Distribution



*Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization, Modified Monash Model



Working Together to Enhance Victoria's Rural Health Workforce

The RWAV Conference 'Working Together to Enhance Victoria's Rural Health Workforce,' was held on 16 February 2023 in Geelong. It was a platform for delegates to discuss crucial issues impacting rural communities, the viability of the rural health workforce in Victoria and potential solutions.

Passionate health professionals shared their challenges, including limited workforce availability and inadequate investment and policy support affecting patient care. However, among these challenges, attendees also identified many opportunities to improve future outcomes.

RWAV is committed to continuing these conversations and working towards effective solutions in collaboration with all stakeholders. RWAV sponsored nine medical students at the Conference, enriching discussions and debates with their insights across the event.

"I find these events really interesting and engaging, and love being able to hear about the challenges and what the future holds for me in a way."
– Jemma, university student



University students attending the RWAV Conference 2023

Program Key Participants



Keynote Speaker Jill Gallagher AO

CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation



Christine Couzens MP

State Member for Geelong and Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples



Dr Anne Webster MP

Shadow Assistant Minister for Regional Health

Jacque Phillips

CEO, Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah Health

Rowena Clift

CEO at Western Victoria Primary Health Network

Jane Anderson

Latrobe Health Advocate

Dr Andrew Horwood

GP Specialist, Pain Management Wimmera Southern-Mallee Integrated Pain Service

Dr Anita Muñoz

Chair of the Vic Faculty, The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Dr Dan Wilson

President, Rural Doctors Association Victoria

Dr Greg Gladman

National Director of Training, The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

Abe Ropitini

Executive Director Population Health, VACCHO

Katrina Streatfeild

Clinic Principal, Streatfeild Psychology

Dr Naomi Malone

Director, A Life Simply Lived Psychology



Scan to see what attendees had to say about the RWAV Conference

www.rwav.com.au/2023-rwav-conference-highlights



Scan to watch the live recording of the RWAV Conference

www.rwav.com.au/2023-rwav-conference-video



Allied Health Panel, RWAV CEO Trevor Carr, Simon Flagg, Ainsleigh Whelan, Dr Naomi Malone, Daniel Searle & Katrina Streatfeild



GP Panel, Abe Ropitini, Dr Greg Gladman, Dr Dan Wilson & Dr Anita Muñoz



Strategic Panel, Elaine Mallows, Dr Sophie Ping, A/Prof Rex Prabhu, Dr Ka Chun Tse, Dr Loren Sher & Cath Maloney

Register now for the 2024 RWAV Conference
at www.rwavconference.com.au



Conferences and Presentations

RWAV attended several key conferences throughout the 2022-23 financial year to attract doctors and allied health professionals to consider a career in rural Victoria. The team liaised with many stakeholders, GPs, OTs, speech pathologists and other allied health professionals, as well as students, registrars and practice managers. They discussed recruitment and locum opportunities, which generated considerable interest.

General Practitioner Conference & Exhibition



The OTA 30th National Conference and Exhibition at the Cairns Convention Centre Queensland



ACRRM RMA22 Conference, Canberra



Speech Pathologist Australia (SPA) Conference in Hobart



GP22 Conference



The National Rural Health Conference (NRHC)



The RWAV team had the opportunity to meet those working to improve healthcare access to rural regions across the country. They engaged with various stakeholders and learnt and shared the work done in the rural health sector.

Victorian Rural Health Conference 2023 – Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV)



RWAV's then Acting CEO, Lauren Cordwell, delivered an inspiring speech on the promising future of the rural health workforce. "It was a privilege to connect with rural medical professionals making an impact in their communities." Lauren Cordwell said.

RWAV sponsored Sonya Klimpsch, a final-year medical student from Deakin University Ballarat, to attend the conference. She took to the stage to speak about her passion to pursue a career in rural health upon her graduation.

RWAV Financial Performance for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

RWAV financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2023 was very positive with an improvement on the previous year in achieving its highest revenue since 2019 and in delivering a surplus.

Revenue from the delivery of its Programs was \$16.8m or more than 20% higher than the previous year. This is the result of hard work from the RWAV service delivery teams in increasing the spend on its existing programs and uptakes on new programs such as the Mental Health Workforce Incentive.

RWAV delivered a surplus for the year of \$301,847, up from a deficit of (\$149,089), an improvement of \$450,396. This is a great outcome during a period of high inflation, demonstrating RWAV's commitment to delivering its programs as cost effectively as possible.

RWAV's net asset position is strong, increasing by \$319,946 on the previous year. The overall cash position has reduced from the prior year as a result of surplus repayments and utilisation of funding for programs received in advance.

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue	16,782,543	13,756,680
Projects and grants expense	(8,218,710)	(7,363,489)
Employee benefits expense	(6,546,789)	(5,172,644)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(244,598)	(353,755)
Other expenses	(1,419,928)	(998,897)
Finance costs	(50,671)	(16,984)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	301,847	(149,089)
Other comprehensive income		
Revaluation of financial instruments at FVOCI	18,099	(78,216)
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year, net of tax	18,099	(78,216)
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	319,946	(227,305)

Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	367,650	8,735,744
Trade and other receivables	77,598	127,756
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	445,248	8,863,500
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Trade and other receivables	194,532	193,710
Financial assets at fair value	14,361,628	8,217,850
Property, plant and equipment	1,821	21,847
Right-of-use assets	1,122,854	1,347,426
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	15,680,835	9,780,833
TOTAL ASSETS	16,126,083	18,644,333

Statement of Financial Position (Cont.)

As At 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	971,066	2,735,385
Lease liabilities	201,908	185,813
Employee benefits	421,953	330,116
Provisions	502,351	1,783,934
Contract liabilities	7,971,735	7,670,116
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	10,069,013	12,705,364
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	963,146	1,165,142
Employee benefits	73,047	72,896
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,036,193	1,238,038
TOTAL LIABILITIES	11,105,206	13,943,402
NET ASSETS	5,020,877	4,700,931
EQUITY		
Retained Surplus	5,047,992	4,746,145
Reserves	(27,115)	(45,214)
TOTAL EQUITY	5,020,877	4,700,931



Wurundjeri Country

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www.rwav.com.au

