

Australia gives boost to rural health training

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Extending one of the nation's premier rural health workforce initiatives



The Australian government will extend one of the nation's premier rural health workforce initiatives, following an evaluation of the programme highlighted its effectiveness in addressing workforce shortages.

Regional Health Minister, Mark Coulton, said Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program will continue to provide more than \$200 million per year over three years to fund a network of rural clinical schools, university departments of rural health, and regional training hubs across rural and remote Australia.

"Extending the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) Program reaffirms the Government's commitment to addressing health workforce shortages in rural areas.

"The RHMT is one of our most effective rural workforce initiatives and I'm pleased to see it continue with the funding and settings it needs to deliver better outcomes for rural communities," Mr Coulton said.

"The evaluation demonstrates that universities continue to provide health students with quality rural clinical training experiences and that the presence of universities in regional, rural, and remote communities has social and economic benefits to these communities and their health services."

The review's recommendations aim to build on the success of the 20-year-old program. These recommendations recognise the teaching innovations and maturity of the program, while allowing for some areas of reform.

The reforms, to be phased in from 1 January 2022, will focus on key program outcomes such as student selection and quality placements, strengthening research networks, and responding to community and workforce need.