



Sharing practitioner experiences

Insights from the federal AMA's 2025
Rural Health Issues Survey



International medical graduates

Insights and policy priorities from the 2025 AMA Rural Health Issues Survey

International medical graduates are vital to rural healthcare, delivering essential services in underserved communities. With 64 per cent intending to stay, their long-term commitment depends on workplace conditions, family support, and clear career pathways to ensure sustainable, high-quality care.

1

Financial incentives and practice support

Theme: Attract and retain IMGs through meaningful financial benefits.

Policy priorities: Remove rural practice barriers, expand incentives and tax breaks, and include orientation and mentoring in packages.

2

Housing and family support

Theme: Make rural living viable for IMGs and their families.

Policy priorities: Provide rental and housing relief, improve partner job opportunities, ensure family-friendly schooling and childcare, and offer mental health and cultural adjustment support.

3

Career pathways and training models

Theme: Build sustainable careers for IMGs in rural practice.

Policy priorities: Maximise IMGs' skills in rural care, deliver structured orientation programs, provide mentoring and feedback, and expand career progression and specialisation

4

Workforce distribution and support

Theme: Address inequitable placements and resource shortages.

Policy priorities: Phase out the 10-year moratorium and replace it with targeted incentives, establish independent workforce planning for better data and strategy, and improve support via funded supervision standards, reduced training costs, and onboarding programs.

5

Streamlined registration and systemic reform

Theme: Remove bureaucratic barriers and align with global best practice.

Policy priorities: Simplify registration processes, remove duplication and outdated steps, provide transparent job and support information, reduce delays and bias in accreditation, and align with global best practice.



Specialist GPs and rural generalists

Insights and policy priorities from the 2025 AMA Rural Health Issues Survey

Specialist GPs and rural generalists are essential to rural health. Their priorities focus on fair pay, strong training pathways, community supports, and sustainable workforce strategies to ensure equitable access and high-quality care for rural Australians.

1

Workforce conditions and retention

Theme: Secure a sustainable rural workforce through fair conditions and support.

Policy priorities: Equalise salary and leave for GP trainees, fund staffing, facilities, and ancillary services, provide locum relief and flexible work arrangements for rural doctors, and involve rural professionals in policy decisions.

2

Financial incentives and viability

Theme: Make rural practice financially sustainable.

Policy priorities: Expand rural incentive payments and infrastructure grants, provide tax offsets and payroll exemptions for rural practice, improve funding for maternity services, and maintain specialist outreach services integrated with local care.

3

Training and career pathways

Theme: Build strong GP and rural generalist training models.

Policy priorities: Strengthen the National Rural Generalist Pathway and other rural training options, support advanced skills development and integrated training across settings, and ensure ongoing skills maintenance in hospitals and community care.

4

Family and community supports

Theme: Remove lifestyle barriers to rural practice.

Policy priorities: Improve access to housing and childcare, and provide family support, including spousal employment and relocation assistance.

5

Recognition and scope of practice

Theme: Enable all doctors in rural practice to work to their full scope and deliver integrated care.

Policy priorities: Recognise rural generalism while valuing all doctors equally, broaden hospital practice rights for credentialed practitioners, and support all doctors who choose rural work by removing barriers and ensuring equity.

... knowing my presence makes a tangible difference in their lives is incredibly fulfilling.



Non-GP specialists in rural practice

Insights and policy priorities from the 2025 AMA Rural Health Issues Survey

Non-GP specialists are critical to rural health, providing outreach and fly-in services that sustain vulnerable communities. Their long-term commitment depends on workforce support, infrastructure, incentives, and family integration to ensure equitable access to specialist care.

1

Workforce sustainability

Theme: Build a stable, supported specialist workforce in rural areas.

Policy priorities: Address chronic shortages and burnout through systemic support, develop long-term retention strategies beyond short-term incentives, and embed clinician-led input in rural health policy decisions.

2

Financial equity

Theme: Ensure fair remuneration and financial security for rural specialists.

Policy priorities: Introduce tax incentives and salary loading, and improve MBS rebates and funding parity between rural and metro practice.

3

Specialist training pathways

Theme: Create accessible, rural-focused training and career progression.

Policy priorities: Expand rural training opportunities and accredited sites, and reform accreditation barriers for rural practice.

4

Infrastructure and service access

Theme: Deliver modern facilities and integrated care models.

Policy priorities: Upgrade diagnostic tools and hospital facilities, implement hub-and-spoke models linking rural and metro services, and ensure maternity services and ancillary care are adequately funded.

5

Family and community support

Theme: Make rural living viable for specialists and their families.

Policy priorities: Improve housing, childcare, and partner employment options, and foster community connection to strengthen retention.

Sense of purpose in providing important specialist services where there is scarcity.



Doctors in training in rural practice

Insights and policy priorities from the 2025 AMA Rural Health Issues Survey

Nearly half of doctors in training (47 per cent) aspire to long-term rural practice. Yet barriers — pay inequity, burnout, limited pathways, and family support gaps — risk derailing these intentions. Turning commitment into reality requires targeted policy action.

1

Financial equity and rural incentives

Theme: Rural DiTs face pay disparities and lack financial compensation for placements.

Policy priority: Equalise pay and provide targeted financial incentives to make rural training sustainable.

2

Workforce retention and burnout

Theme: Burnout from understaffing, unrostered overtime, and short-term contracts drives workforce loss.

Policy priority: Focus on retention through better rostering, job security, and long-term contracts.

3

Training pathways and career progression

Theme: Limited specialist training options force DiTs to relocate to metro areas.

Policy priority:
Develop rural training pathways for non-GP specialties.

4

Infrastructure and family support

Theme: Housing, childcare, and partner employment are major barriers to staying rural.

Policy priority: Invest in housing and community supports.

5

Respect and advocacy for rural practice

Theme: Rural DiTs report metro elitism and seek respect and recognition.

Policy priority: Drive cultural change and establish strong advocacy for rural training and practice.

There are no specialist training opportunities rurally... I prefer rural, I want to be rural, but it would end my career.

