



Australian Government

Office of the National Rural
Health Commissioner

Rural Generalist Workforce:

How we promote, support and grow

Adjunct Professor Ruth Stewart
Australia's National Rural Health Commissioner
RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting
Thursday, April 6, 2023



Australian Government

National Rural Health Commissioner

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional and ancestral territories of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille First Nations people who have lived in harmony with the land and waters here for millennia.

I pay my respects to the Salish and Pend d'Oreille Elders – past, present and emerging.

I extend that respect to First Nations people with us today.

Today's Presentation Summary

1. Australia's Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner
2. Rural Generalism
3. Developing a training & workforce pathway for Rural Generalists
4. Progress on Australia's National Rural Generalist Pathway
5. Learnings & ways forward

The role of the National Rural Health Commissioner

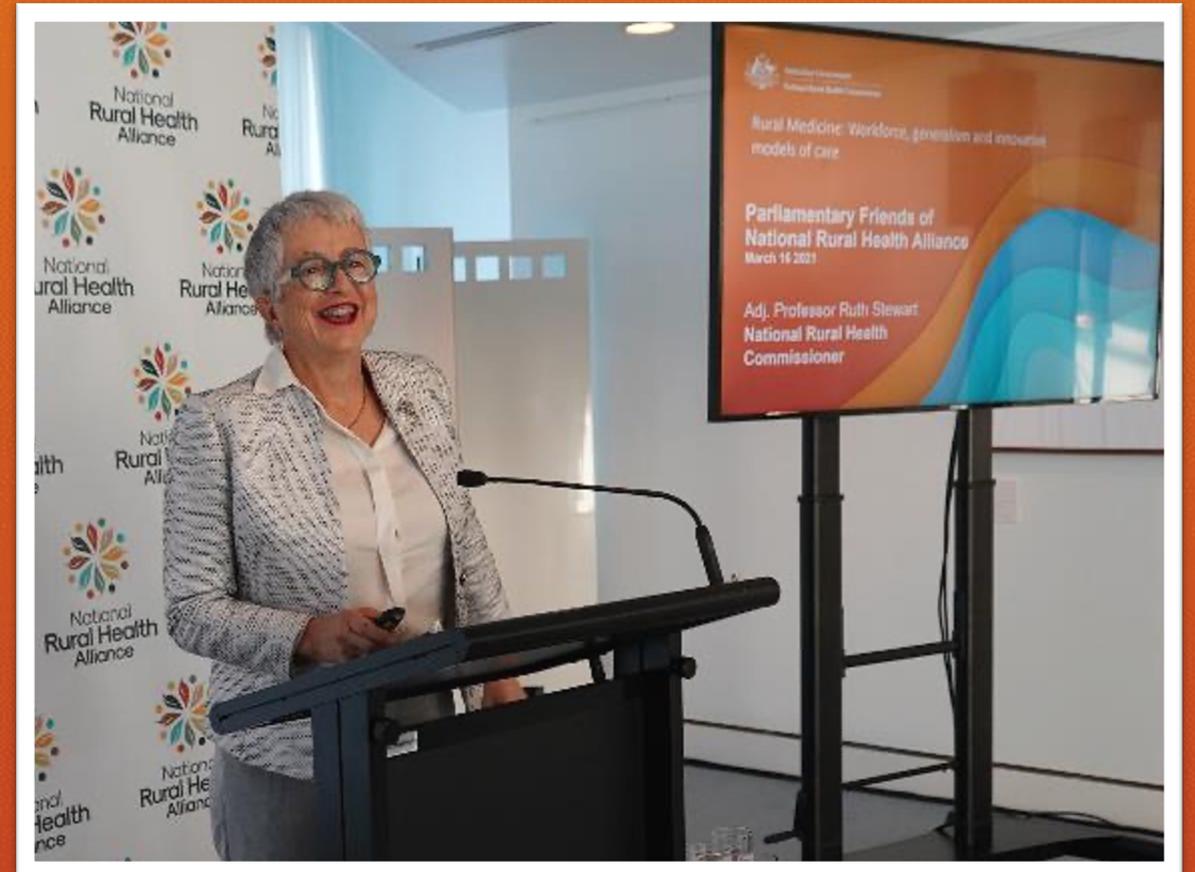
Support urgent & emerging priorities

Contribute to implementation of innovative models of care

Support First Nations peoples' health & wellbeing

Rural Generalism

Stakeholder relationships



The role of the Deputy Commissioners

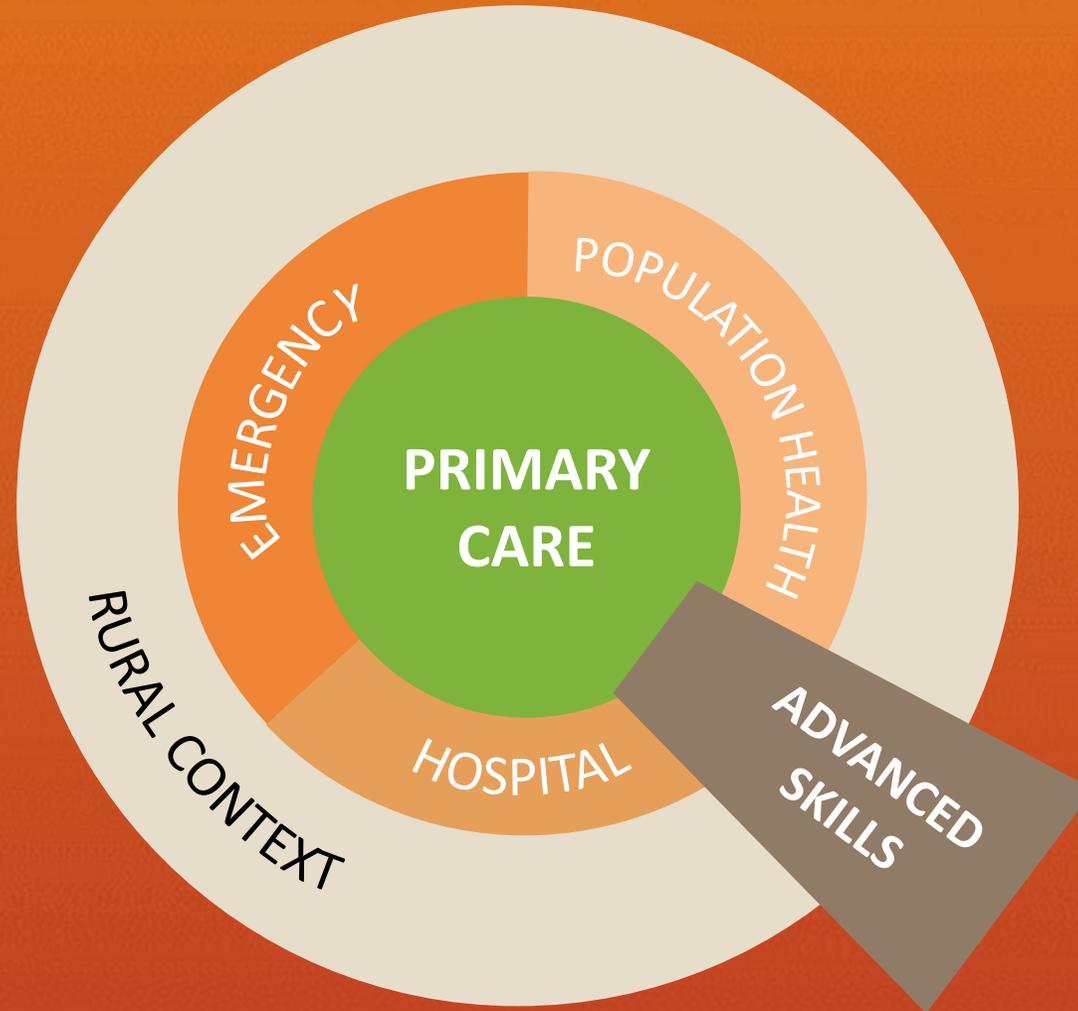
Support the Commissioner in achieving goals

Provide expert advice in their disciplines

Engage with rural, regional & remote stakeholder groups



Rural Generalism

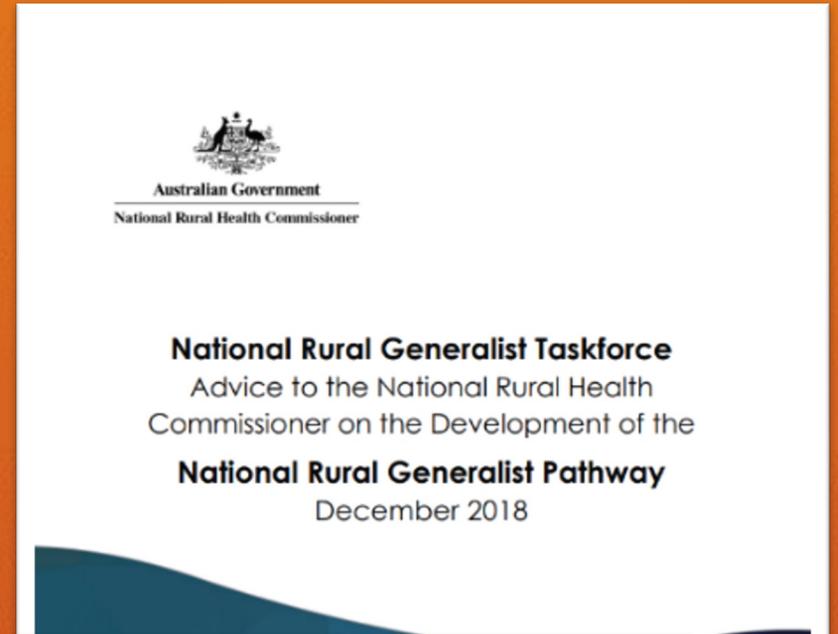


The Collingrove Agreement:

A Rural Generalist is a medical practitioner who is trained to meet the specific current and future health care needs of Australian rural and remote communities in a sustainable and cost-effective way by providing both **comprehensive general practice** and **emergency care** and **required components of other medical specialist care in hospital and community settings** as part of a rural healthcare team

Australia's Rural Generalist Taskforce

- A broad group of key stakeholders in rural health
- Formulated advice on the design & implementation of a National Rural Generalist Pathway
- Submitted report to Government



Goals of Australia's Rural Generalist Pathway

Formal recognition of Rural Generalism

Streamline training

Increase Medicare benefits for 'like for like' work & by rurality

Increase training & job opportunities

Retain Rural Generalists in rural & remote communities



Stock Image

Australia's Rural Generalist Pathway

A dedicated medical training pathway to attract, retain & support Rural Generalists

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency & Medical Board recognition of Rural Generalist as a specialised field within the speciality of General Practice

National consistency with the potential for local application



National recognition of specialised field of General Practice: Rural Generalist

A Taskforce has submitted an application to AMC & MBA arguing:

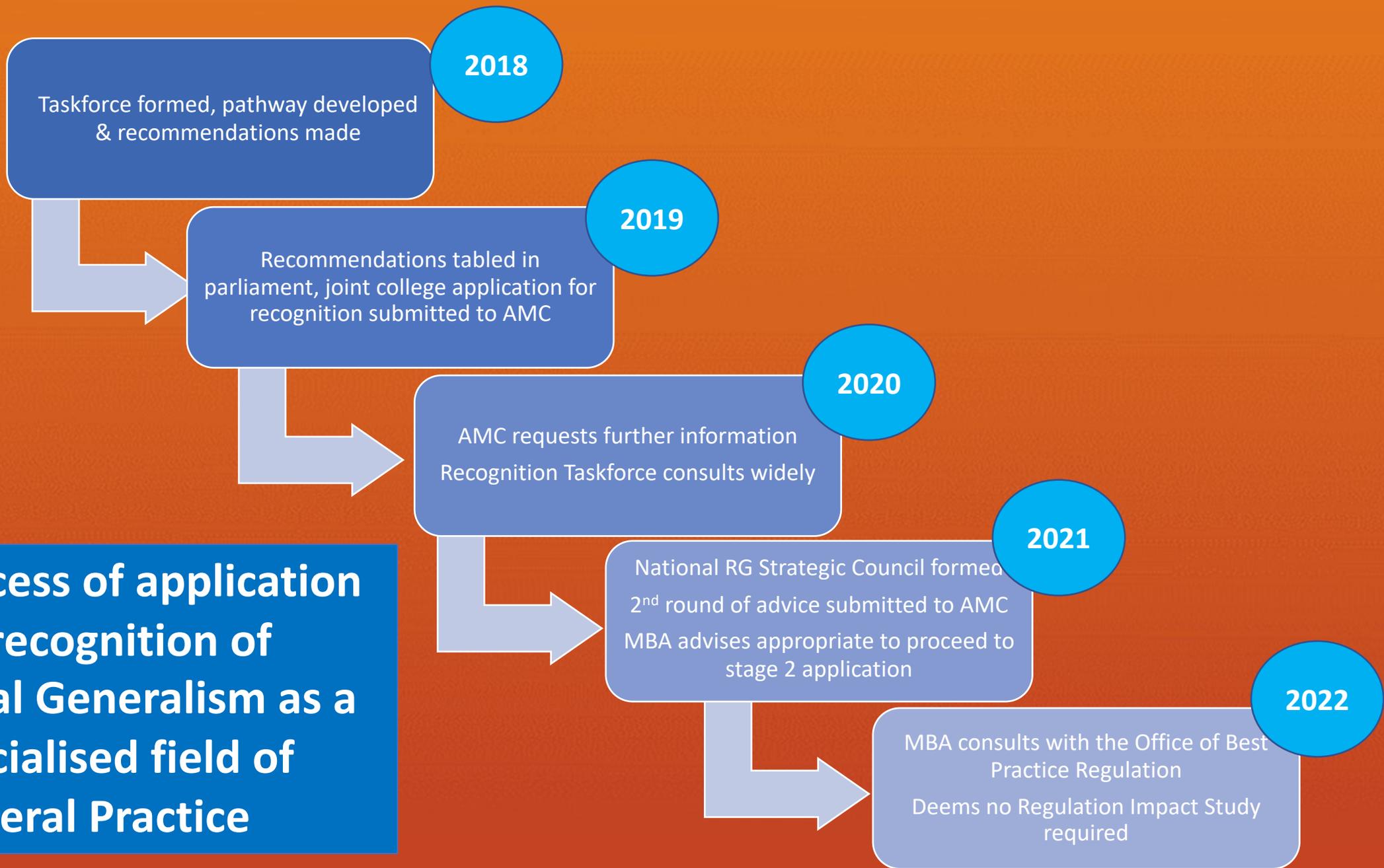
- Rural Generalism is a distinct and legitimate area of specialist practice within the field of general practice
- The field can contribute to the standards of medical practice
- Recognition will address Australia's service delivery & quality of care

If recognition is successful, 'Rural Generalist' will be a protected title in Australia

A specialised field within the speciality of General Practice

| Specialty | Fields of specialty practice | Specialist titles |
|---|--|--|
| Addiction medicine | — | Specialist in addiction medicine |
| Anaesthesia | — | Specialist anaesthetist |
| Dermatology | — | Specialist dermatologist |
| Emergency medicine | — | Specialist emergency physician |
| | Paediatric emergency medicine | Specialist paediatric emergency physician |
| General practice | — | Specialist general practitioner |
| Intensive care medicine | — | Specialist intensive care physician |
| | Paediatric intensive care medicine | Specialist paediatric intensive care physician |
| Medical administration | — | Specialist medical administrator |
| Obstetrics and gynaecology | — | Specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist |
| | Gynaecological oncology | Specialist gynaecological oncologist |
| | Maternal–fetal medicine | Specialist in maternal–fetal medicine |
| | Obstetrics and gynaecological ultrasound | Specialist in obstetrics and gynaecological ultrasound |
| | Reproductive endocrinology and infertility | Specialist in reproductive endocrinology and infertility |
| | Urogynaecology | Specialist urogynaecologist |
| Occupational and environmental medicine | — | Specialist occupational and environmental physician |
| Ophthalmology | — | Specialist ophthalmologist |

Process of application for recognition of Rural Generalism as a specialised field of General Practice



AMC to conduct Stage 2
assessment
Estimate 6-12 months

AMC provides
recommendation to
MBA

MBA provides
recommendation to the
Council of Health
Ministers

If successful, RG
recognised as a
specialised field within
general practice &
Fellowship programs
are approved through
AMC processes

?2024

**Further steps in application for recognition of
Rural Generalism as a specialised field of
General Practice**

Progress on Australia's Rural Generalist Pathway

Gaps in the training pipeline for Rural Generalists are reducing

Work underway on:

- Tiered Medicare payments recognising & rewarding
 - practice in rural locations
 - advanced skills
 - scope of practice
- Single employer models



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Transition to College-led Training

Australian General Practice Training was previously administered by the Australian Government via Regional Training Organisations

Transition planning included:

- Joint GP college Advisory Committee
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee
- Workshops on nationally consistent payments for practices, supervisors & registrars



Photo: Ruth Stewart.

Transition to the GP colleges occurred on February 1, 2023

Issues to be managed in the National Rural Generalist Pathway

Challenges of coordination & consistency across states & territories

Need to value & support:

- Rural origin students,
- Rural curriculum,
- Rural intent,&
- Rural early career jobs



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Thank you