



GPs4RuralDocs

Program summary



Keeping our health practitioners in rural communities

Rural Doctors Foundation is delivering an innovative model of care to provide GP services to health practitioners living and working in rural and remote communities.

The objectives of this program are:

- To provide independent accessible primary healthcare to rural and remote healthcare professionals
- To keep rural healthcare professionals in their communities, ensuring access to quality healthcare by rural and remote Australians particularly our First Nations people.

Due to a lack of access to health care, rural health practitioners are neglecting their own health, leading to burnout and increased incidences of physical and mental health issues.

This has led to more rural health practitioners either reducing hours or leaving rural practice. With **GPs4RuralDocs**, rural health practitioners can prioritise their own personal health and wellbeing without having to leave their town or patients.

Under the **GPs4RuralDocs** model, rural health practitioners receive a combination of regular face-to-face, in-town consultations by the same visiting doctor supplemented by telehealth consultation services between visits. The service is delivered by our team of GPs who understand rural practice and are trained in doctor-to-doctor care and mental health.

GPs4RuralDocs

Fully funded program to keep our rural GPs and health practitioners healthy and in their town

Delivered in town
GPs come to rural community



Telehealth support
Supplemented by telehealth in between face-to-face visits



Continuity of care
Quarterly visits by same doctor



Understanding of rural health
Delivered by doctors with experience in doctor-to-doctor care and mental health. Supported by a Medical Director.



Program framework

Each stage of the program is subject to review by our Board and Committees.

Stages completed



Program delivery

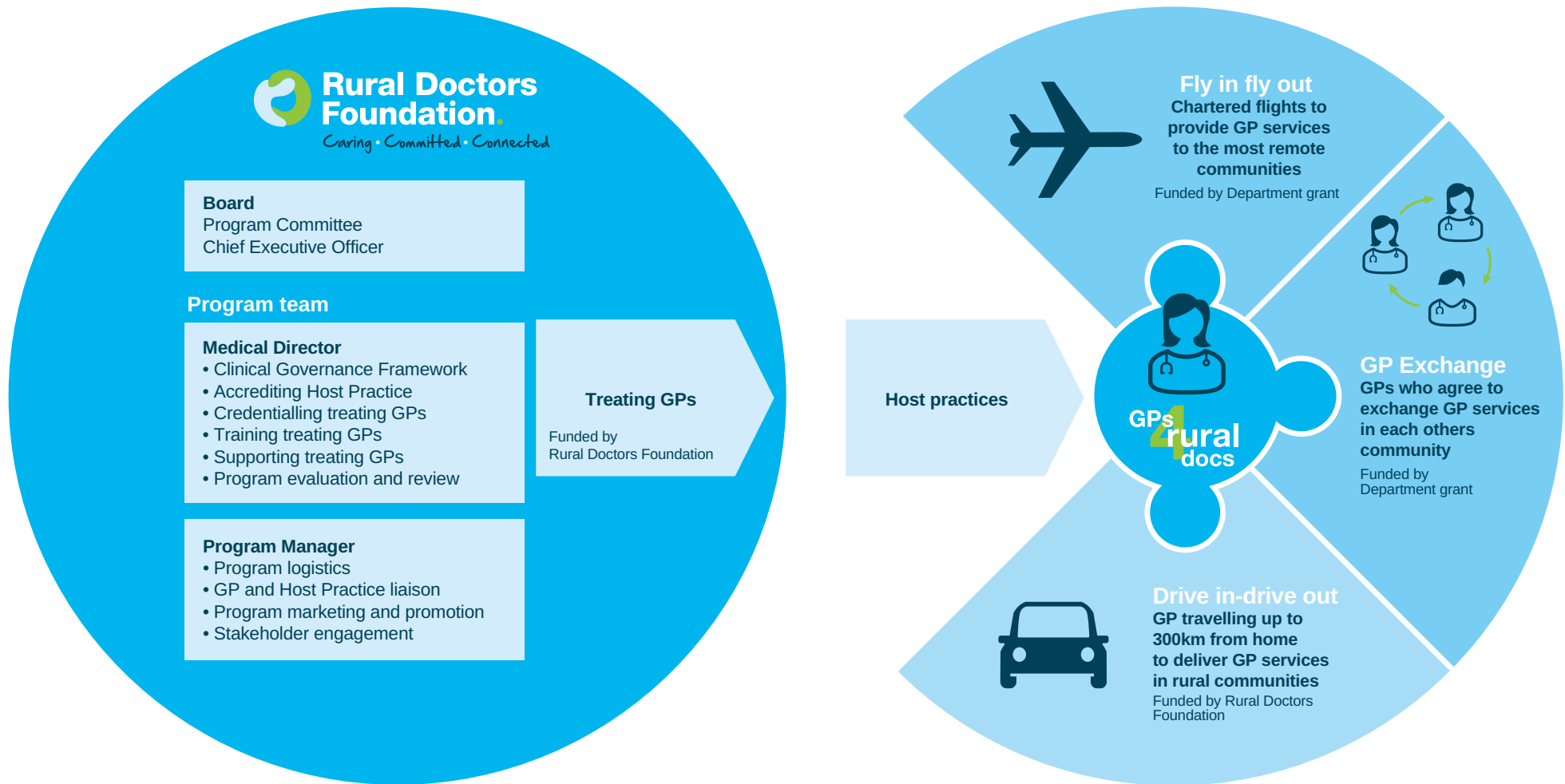


Future reporting



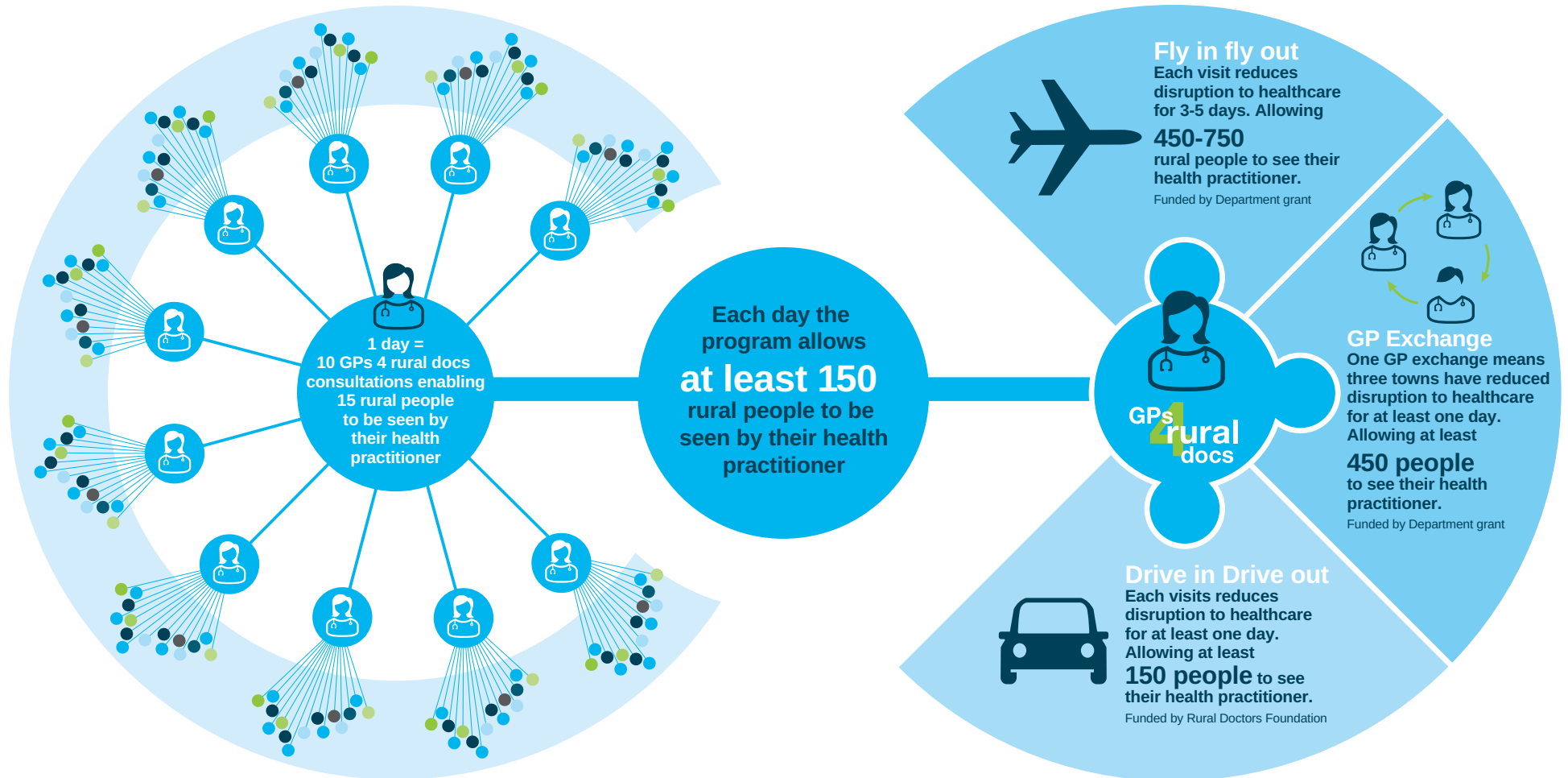
Models of delivery

The GPs 4 rural docs program will trial three delivery models. The funding provided through this grant will enable the delivery of the Fly in fly out and the GP Exchange models. We will evaluate for efficiency, cost effectiveness and delivery of improved health outcomes.



Outcomes for GPs4RuralDocs

Without access to local healthcare health practitioners must travel out of town for up to a week at a time. Consider how many patients will continue to have access to healthcare during this time.



Outcomes



To **apply key learnings** to the implementation of a GPs 4 rural docs program across Australia.



We will have a **replicable model** designed to roll out across Australia to support rural health practitioners, and ultimately support the health of rural Australia.

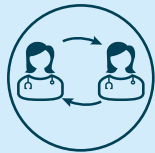


This will support health practitioners to **remain in rural communities** and build a more resilient rural health workforce.

Benefits



Delivering GP services to rural health practitioners



Maximising well-being and resilience of rural health practitioners



Building the sustainability of the rural health service (private and public)



Maintaining access to health care for rural communities



Improved health outcomes for rural Australians

Challenges and our response

Challenges

- Recruiting and retaining GPs
- Ongoing funding
- Convincing rural health practitioners they will receive confidential and independent care
- Engaging host practices
- Delivery will be to the more remote locations

Which is why

- No one has delivered continuity of care to rural health practitioners in community in a sustainable manner

Why Rural Doctors Foundation can deliver this

We have

- Conducted extensive research and prepared a feasibility study exploring various operating models. Potential risks and risk mitigation strategies clearly defined
- Committed and dedicated Board and Executive team comprised of rural GPs and business professionals with real life experience of rural health and its challenges
- Investment funds available to embed program in communities and enable refinement of replicable model
- Established networks in place committed to supporting the program
- Access to expertise that will ensure our expectations are realistic
- Defined a delivery model that is scalable and sustainable

Healthy rural practitioners equals healthy rural Australia

Rural health practitioners are the backbone to the state of health of our rural communities. Supporting our rural medical practitioners is crucial to looking after the health of those living in rural and remote communities. We need to do everything we can to attract and keep GPs and health practitioners in our rural communities.

Rural GPs and health practitioners are working long hours. They do not want to leave their patients to attend to their own health. This is leading to high levels of burnout, leaving many communities at risk of losing access to local health services.

Like their rural community, GPs and health practitioners have limited access to personal healthcare – but it's often more critical, as they may be the only GP or practitioner in town. Access to independent and confidential healthcare is even more difficult.



Psychological distress **3.4%** higher amongst doctors compared to other professions



Up to **30%** of rural health practitioners have no access to local healthcare



65-75% of Australian doctors experience burnout and is the second most cited reason for doctors leaving practice or reducing hours.



44% of rural healthcare practitioners travel over **300km** and for our more remote regions, **80%** are travelling over **300km** to receive healthcare



Lack of healthcare is impacting the ability to continue practice for **17%** of rural health practitioners



16% receive healthcare from a doctor within their own practice

GPs and health practitioners have limited access to personal healthcare. They may be the only health GP or practitioner in town – and so access to independent and confidential healthcare is difficult.



Improving the health of our rural communities is vital to all of us

People living in rural and remote communities are responsible for 90% of the food on Australian tables and contribute approximately 67% of Australia's exports.

They represent 28% of our population yet sadly only receive 1.1% of the health funding available in Australia. And, as you can appreciate the research cost of providing health care to rural and remote communities is greater than in larger centres.



About us

Rural Doctors Foundation is a national rural health charity. As rural doctors, we see health inequities every day. There are fewer services as well as fewer resources and health professionals in rural areas. As a result, Australians in these communities face higher incidence of disease and have poorer health outcomes.

We recognise the invaluable role of our dedicated rural GPs and health practitioners in providing essential healthcare to the communities they serve.

We believe that everyone deserves a healthy life, no matter where they live. Our work helps our rural colleagues and their communities with improved access to life-saving medical care through the promotion and delivery of innovative health programs, supply of medical equipment and helping in times of crisis and disaster.

The people we serve in rural and remote communities have unique needs. Rural Doctors Foundation recognises the diverse health needs of all people that make up regional areas.

Our work supports the health and vibrancy of Australia's Indigenous and farming communities and regional townships. So, it's about working with remote and rural people, on the ground, to deliver the right support, in the right way.

By partnering with Rural Doctors Foundation, in the development and roll-out of **GPs4RuralDocs**, you help safeguard the health of our rural doctors and ultimately our rural communities.



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To learn more about how you can support this vital program, contact us on **(07) 3039 0011** or email info@ruraldoctorsfoundation.org.au



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