NSW RURAL GENERALIST TRAINING PROGRAM
2016 PROSPECTUS
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What is the Rural Generalist Training Program?

The aim of the Rural Generalist Training Program (RGTP) is to provide a supported training pathway for junior doctors wishing to pursue a career as a rural general practitioner able to provide primary care within a community general practice setting as well as advanced procedural services within a rural hospital.

Senior clinicians and others involved in the development of the RGTP believe that the provision of a structured training program that links the career aspirations of individual doctors with rural training and employment opportunities is key to securing a stable medical workforce for rural communities within NSW in the future.

BACKGROUND

The RGTP is the result of a partnership between HETI, rural Local Health Districts (LHDs) and the NSW Ministry of Health, working with the following organisations in the development of the program:

- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP),
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM),
- Rural Doctor’s Association of NSW (RDA) and the
- Rural Doctor’s Network (RDN) NSW

The RGTP commenced in 2013 with an initial intake of 13 general practice trainees. Since then the program has been expanded and in the 2016 clinical year, 30 positions will be available for training.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The RGTP is a training program of up to four years in duration (depending on the year of entry). It comprises a foundation year of hospital practice, a year of advanced skills training (currently in either anaesthetics or obstetrics or a combination of emergency medicine and obstetrics) and two years of support to consolidate procedural skills whilst training in community general practice or other approved training posts. There is flexibility to enter later in GP training if eligible trainees are identified and positions are available.
All trainees on the program are required to be enrolled and working toward meeting the requirements of Fellowship with either the RACGP/FARGP and/or ACRRM. Earliest entry onto the RGTP is at the commencement of postgraduate year two (PGY 2) which aligns with entry into general practice training.

Upon successful completion of the RGTP, trainees will exit with a Fellowship with either the RACGP and Fellowship of Advanced Rural Practice (FARGP) and/or the ACRRM and qualifications in at least one advanced procedural skill.

Training in advanced procedural skills will be overseen by the relevant specialty college and leads to the attainment of qualifications that meet the accreditation standards of that college.

The Rural Generalist Training Program provides a structured training pathway for junior doctors aiming to enter general practice in a rural setting.
PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The governance of the RGTP is a three-way partnership between HETI, LHDs and general practice training providers. Each makes a different contribution to the provision of an integrated training pathway for doctors wanting to pursue a career in rural general practice.

HETI manages the coordination and funding of the RGTP. LHDs employ doctors in their foundation and advanced skills years and ensure the hospital-based terms meet accreditation requirements of the relevant Colleges. The general practice training providers’ role is to administer the general practice training, including oversight of trainees during their community practice terms.

The whole program is overseen by the RGTP Statewide Council, which provides advice on the development, delivery and administration of the program and ensures continuous alignment of the program with rural service needs and workforce requirements.

“Working as a rural generalist is the best way to practice comprehensive medicine.”
WHAT DOES THE RGTP OFFER?

- Structured training pathway to rural general practice with procedural skills
- Advanced skills rotations in hospitals which are accredited by the relevant College
- Orientation program
- Monthly education sessions with clinical case presentations
- Career advice and support by experienced rural general practitioners
- Financial contribution for approved courses
- Weekend training workshops
- Mentoring program
- Regular opportunities to meet and network with other RGTP trainees
- Access to senior clinicians for support and advice throughout the program
- Opportunities for trainees who have completed AST requirements to be credentialed to provide advanced procedural skills in designated hospitals whilst completing Fellowship requirements
- Dedicated staff working with LHDs, general practice training providers and other training partners who are committed to assisting junior doctors achieve a career in rural medical practice.

1 The level of funding available for assistance to attend approved courses is determined on an annual basis. Further information is available from HETI program staff.
Working as a rural generalist in NSW

INTRODUCTION

Many general practitioners who work in rural and regional areas have undertaken further procedural training in various clinical disciplines, which have enabled them to provide a greater range of clinical services within their rural communities. Working in this way has many rewards but requires engaging in further training and clinical experience.

Historically, qualified general practitioners attained this additional experience and training independently, often through arranging specific rotations or sometimes being prepared to work overseas in order to complete further qualifications.

The RGTP provides a structured pathway, in collaboration with general practice training providers and LHDs, leading to the attainment of qualifications, skills and experience required of medical practitioners choosing a career as a rural generalist.

WORKING IN RURAL NSW

For doctors interested in rural general practice, NSW has a lot to offer. There are a range of different sized rural communities, from very large regional centres with specialist support services through to remote one-doctor towns and everything in between.

"There is a strong sense of belonging to a community and being an integral part of it."

Rural general practice offers medical practitioners multiple opportunities to practice medicine in a variety of contexts and roles. Whilst most rural generalists work in privately run general practices, many also have clinical privileges in both general practice and an advanced procedural skill thereby affording them the opportunity to provide advanced procedural skills in a variety of specialties at the local base or district hospital.
Many senior clinicians who practice as procedural general practitioners extoll the virtues of rural medicine with exposure to a range of patients and clinical problems. These doctors highlight the rewards of practicing ‘cradle to the grave’ medicine where the patient is recognised as part of a community in which the doctor is also an integral part.

Experienced rural doctors who have worked throughout their careers in rural communities also emphasise the collegiality they have with other doctors, both general practitioners and specialists, as well as other members of the healthcare team, developed over years of working together.

Such close professional relationships are nurtured and developed through shared professional experiences, education and training, peer support, and often through common social, sporting and other interests – be it winemaking, farming, kayaking or cycling.

“Rural generalism is a really important concept for the community. It provides high quality health care across the continuum.”
The RGTP is a training program providing a pathway to rural general practice with at least one advanced procedural skill. All trainees on the RGTP are required to be concurrently enrolled in and working toward meeting the requirements of either the FRACGP/FARGP and/or the FACRRM.

FOUNDATION YEAR

From 2016, the majority of trainees accepted onto the RGTP will commence the program with a Foundation Year (usually undertaken in either the PGY2 or PGY3 year).

Foundation Year RGTP trainees at PGY2 level will remain on their existing contract with their employing LHD and complete a series of rotations within an accredited hospital or health service. These rotations will provide trainees with opportunities to consolidate general skills required of medical practitioners, articulated in the Australian Curriculum Framework for Junior Doctors. Progression to PGY2 assumes successful completion of the intern year, including the mandatory experience prescribed by the Medical Board of Australia.
Some specific hospital based rotations are required for general practice training and these should generally be completed during the PGY2 year. The requirements for rotations vary according to the College and may include paediatrics, emergency medicine and other relevant terms.

The text box above provides a guide to the rotations required. For specific advice regarding prerequisite hospital based terms, trainees should refer to their particular college or seek advice through their designated general practice training provider.

Key principles

- The RGTP is a statewide training program with the aim of producing doctors who are general practitioners with advanced skills able to deliver services to rural communities.

- The RGTP was developed on the premise that community general practice is the main provider of primary health care in NSW and therefore it is important for general practice trainees to undertake a significant component of their training in community general practice.

- Upon completion of the RGTP, trainees will exit with a Fellowship of either the Australian College of General Practitioners and Fellowship of Advanced Rural General Practice (FRACGP and FARGP) and/or Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM) and at least one advanced procedural skill.

- The NSW Rural Generalist (RG) is a rural doctor who works in community general practice and a rural hospital where they provide advanced procedural skills.

- The RGTP will seek to align individual career aspirations and training needs with workforce needs and service requirements.

- RGTP trainees will undertake the majority of their general practice training in rural and remote areas of NSW. Advanced skills training will occur in regional and rural areas, except in specific circumstances where it is determined that a metropolitan rotation is required.

- Funding agreements for advanced skills posts will be negotiated with LHDs confirming the number of advanced skills positions on an annual basis.

- The RGTP will ensure a quality training experience in the mix of advanced skills positions that are on offer. Advanced skills training positions will need to meet the accreditation standards of the respective medical specialist college.
ADVANCED SKILLS TRAINING YEAR

All RGTP trainees will undertake one year of advanced skills training (AST). AST is currently available in either obstetrics or anaesthetics or a combined year of obstetrics and emergency medicine.

Training during the AST year should meet the requirements of an Advanced Diploma of Obstetrics (DRANZCOG Advanced) or the requirements specified in the Curriculum Statement in Anaesthesia (CSA) for advanced rural skills and advanced specialised training in the case of anaesthetics. The Conjoint Committee of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (CCOG) oversees training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The Joint Consultative Committee in Anaesthesia (JCCA) oversees training in Anaesthetics.

Those trainees undertaking the combined obstetric/emergency medicine year will complete six months in obstetrics, during which they will undertake the DRANZCOG, in addition to six months in emergency medicine, during which they are encouraged to complete the Emergency Medicine Certificate (EMC) through the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine (ACEM).

The specific requirements for the relevant training program are documented in the relevant College handbook.

COMMUNITY GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING

As part of the requirements for general practice training, all RGTP trainees will complete 24 months of training in community general practice or other approved training posts. This will be arranged through the relevant general practice training provider and may be completed at PGY3, PGY4 or PGY5.

Further information about general practice training is provided in the section under Becoming a trainee on the RGTP.

TRANSITION AND CONSOLIDATION YEARS

Once a trainee has successfully completed the AST year and requirements for advanced procedural skills training, they will undergo a period of skills consolidation and gain further clinical experience in their procedural specialty. The timing of the transition and consolidation years is dependent upon when the trainee completes the AST year in relation to the community general practice training and further information about this is provided in following sections.

ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION

RGTP trainees are required to progress toward Fellowship requirements for the respective general practice College. This includes meeting a number of requirements that are articulated in the relevant College handbook.

All trainees will also be required to undertake periodic assessments as determined by the relevant body. At the PGY2 level, progress review forms are submitted through the hospital based Director of Prevocational Education and Training (DPET). Trainees will also be assessed to determine their readiness to progress to Advanced Skills Training. Further information on this is provided in a later section.

Eligibility requirements to progress to the AST year are detailed in the section on Advanced Skills Training Year. For the AST year, assessment forms are submitted through the clinical supervisor to the relevant College.

During the community general practice component, the general practice training provider administers supervisor’s forms. The assessment requirements and the relevant oversight body are summarised in the table below.

### Governance of trainee assessment requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Term</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Oversight</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGY2</td>
<td>Term Supervisor</td>
<td>HETI</td>
<td>Director of Prevocational Training and Education (DPET)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST year</td>
<td>Training Supervisor (Obstetrician or Anaesthetist)</td>
<td>Speciality College either RANZCOG or ANZCA</td>
<td>Director of Training (Hospitality specialty based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community General Practice</td>
<td>Clinical Supervisor</td>
<td>RACGP or ACRRM</td>
<td>General practice training provider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently asked questions

How long does the training take?
Training on the RGTP takes up to four years, depending on the year of entry. This includes meeting the requirements for general practice training in addition to training in an advanced procedural skill.

How does the RGTP fit with the Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT)?
RGTP trainees must be currently enrolled as a trainee with either RACGP or ACRRM. The advanced skills year is undertaken as part of the four-year general practice training program.

Why do I have to be part of a GP training program to participate in the RGTP?
A rural generalist is still a GP and the required advanced skills for the RG pathway is an optional component of the FRACGP training, but a required component of the FACRRM and the FARGP curricula.

How long does the AST component of training take?
The advanced skills training component takes 12 months full time.

Who is my employer during the AST component?
Local Health Districts will employ trainees under the Medical Officer’s Award during the period of advanced skills training.

Can I undertake training part-time?
Part-time training positions will be considered if all parties are in agreement.

Can I job share with a colleague?
Like part-time training, job share arrangements will be considered if all parties are in agreement and they meet training requirements as specified by the relevant College.

Where will I use my advanced procedural skills?
Following successful completion of the AST year, trainees can apply to the local health service for a position that enables them to practice in the area of advanced skills training.

GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING PROVIDERS

The organisation and delivery of general practice training will change during the latter half of 2015 with full implementation of the new arrangements to commence with the 2016 clinical year. Further information can be obtained from the AGPT website.

USEFUL WEBSITES

AGPT  www.gpet.com.au
ACRRM  www.acrrm.org.au
RACGP  www.racgp.org.au
RDN  www.nswrdn.com.au

“The RGTP is fantastic… it is great to have some structure and support around people who are identified early as wanting to do rural general practice.”
From 2016 onwards, primary entry to the RGTP for junior doctors will be in their PGY 2 year to undertake the program foundation year. This means that junior doctors will apply for the RGTP in their PGY 1 year. Positions for the 2016 Foundation Year will be advertised on the NSW Health Careers site in mid to late September 2015.

The majority of junior doctors employed in NSW who apply during their intern or PGY1 year for commencement onto the RGTP in the following year will have an existing contract with a NSW LHD. Successful PGY2 applicants to the RGTP will therefore remain on their existing contract and will receive a letter welcoming them to the program.

The RGTP Foundation Year (year one) provides an introduction to the program and the opportunity for trainees to be supported in the program and their rural locations.

Activities during the Foundation Year will include:

- Introduction and orientation to the RGTP
- Access to Program and mentor support with career and training advice
- Educational activities
- Mid-point discussions and vocational review with Regional Directors of Training.

“As an RGTP trainee, we get access to additional education sessions and support.”
PROGRESSION TO AST YEAR

Following successful completion of the Foundation Year, junior doctors may proceed to community general practice training or undertake advanced skills training.

Progression to the AST year will be dependent on meeting certain eligibility criteria and standards for performance and readiness assessment as follows:

1. Satisfactory completion of hospital rotations with experience in terms ideally recommended for RACGP/ACRRM pathways: emergency medicine, paediatrics and obstetrics.

2. Satisfactory performance in clinical application, demonstrating initiative and clear decision making especially in critical and undifferentiated areas. This will be assessed by the LHD Director of Medical Services (DMS), Director of Prevocational Education and Training (DPET) and clinical supervisors.

3. Demonstrated completion of the RG Foundation Year Program as assessed by the RGTP team in consultation with LHDs and general practice training providers.

4. Participation in performance assessments and mid-point discussion and review of AST selection and postings

5. Demonstrated commitment, maturity and suitability of AST in the advanced skills of obstetrics, anaesthetics or emergency medicine as assessed by the readiness assessment process.

Whilst lateral entry to AST positions is possible, priority will be given to those trainees who have completed a Foundation Year with the RGTP and meet the above eligibility requirements to proceed to advanced skills training. Further information on lateral entry is provided in a later section.
Advanced skills training year

The hallmark of the RGTP is that all trainees will undertake advanced skills training in a procedural specialty, currently in obstetrics or anaesthetics or mixed obstetrics/emergency medicine.

The advanced skills training undertaken during the RGTP leads to a formal qualification, recognised by the respective consultative committee, overseen by the relevant specialty college and ultimately allows a medical practitioner to be credentialed by a Local Health District to provide those particular procedural services within a public health facility.

Rural LHDs have identified a number of AST posts in collaboration with senior clinicians and administrators, based on workforce need. Given the need to balance individual trainees interests with workforce needs and clinical service requirements, the availability of individual training posts will likely change from year to year.

A fundamental principle of the RGTP is that advanced skills training will generally be undertaken in regional or remote areas, although all terms are required to be accredited by the relevant College. This ensures that trainees have the appropriate clinical exposure and have access to high quality teaching and effective supervision.

In many cases, depending on the size of the facility, RGTP trainees will be working alongside registrars who are undertaking specialty training.

Occasionally, the relevant specialty College may deem that a component of AST training is required to be undertaken in a metropolitan facility. Impacted trainees should consult with the Statewide Director and relevant College for further information.

PARTICIPATING LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS

Rural Local Health Districts within NSW actively support and participate in the RGTP program. Each year, depending on local medical workforce and clinical service needs, rural LHDs will identify potential AST positions and make recommendations to HETI. The map over the page shows positions for the 2015 clinical year.

For the 2016 clinical year, AST positions will be advertised as part of the junior medical officer annual recruitment campaign. Specific information about positions can be found at www.heti.nsw.gov.au/rgtp

NEW POSITION AT BROKEN HILL CONFIRMED FOR 2016

From 2016, Broken Hill Health Service will offer advanced skills training in Obstetrics (Accredited for DRANZCOG Advanced) and Anaesthetics Critical Care (awaiting accreditation with ANZCA/JCCA). Training will be provided in Broken Hill by local specialists in O&G and Anaesthetics/ICU/Critical Care.

Additional experience with partner organisations the Royal Flying Doctor Service, MaarriMa (Aboriginal Maternal and Infant well-being), Mildura Base Hospital and South Australian tertiary hospitals will ensure the rural generalist advanced trainee gets the best of all worlds – remote, rural/regional, aboriginal health and metropolitan tertiary.

OBSTETRICS

There are currently two options for RGTP trainees wishing to pursue advanced skills training in Obstetrics. In the first, trainees complete a combined Obstetric/Emergency year, with the six months in obstetrics leading to the qualification of the Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (DRANZCOG). This qualification
allows the rural generalist the training necessary to provide shared ante- and postnatal care, family planning, office gynaecology, manage the antenatal care of low to moderate risk patients, perform normal and assisted deliveries and perform basic gynaecological procedures.

The six months of emergency medicine provides trainees with opportunities to consolidate emergency and critical care skills in preparation for rural general practice. Although not a mandatory requirement of the combined obstetrics/emergency AST year, trainees undertaking this option are encouraged to complete the Emergency Medicine Certificate (EMC) during the emergency medicine component.

The second option for rural generalists is to complete 12 months in obstetrics leading to the qualification of the Advanced Diploma (DRANZCOG Advanced). Doctors with a DRANZCOG Advanced are able to provide the range of services listed under DRANZCOG above, manage more complicated labours, and perform elective and emergency caesareans (LUSCS) in addition to other procedures.

The Conjoint Committee for the Diploma of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (CDOG) oversees both the DRANZCOG and the DRANZCOG Advanced programs and has representation from the RANZCOG, the RACGP and ACRRM. Responsibility for the administration of the programs, including trainee registration and examinations remains the responsibility of the RANZCOG.

ANAESTHETICS

RGTP trainees wishing to complete advanced skills training in anaesthetics are required to complete 12 months training in an approved anaesthetic training post. The requirements for training are documented in the Curriculum Statement in Anaesthesia for advanced rural skills and advanced specialised training (4th edition, 2010).

The Joint Consultative Committee on Anaesthesia (JCCA) oversights training and has representation by ANZCA, RACGP and ACRRM. This training program provides training for doctors to ensure that they are able to competently manage safe anaesthesia practice in a rural GP setting.
Transition year

Once a trainee has successfully completed the AST year and been awarded the Diploma from the relevant College, they may apply to a LHD to practice medicine in the area of their advanced skills training whilst they continue to work toward completing the requirements of general practice training. This depends on the availability of posts and clinical service needs within particular LHDs.

It is acknowledged that the period immediately post the AST year represents a critical time of skills consolidation. To this end, every endeavor will be made to assist trainees in identifying and optimising opportunities to practice in their procedural area during the community general practice component of their training. A key role of the RGTP team is to assist and support trainees having appropriate access to ongoing procedural work in order to consolidate and maintain skills.
Consolidation year

My intention was always to go into rural medicine. When the opportunity came up to complete a pathway that would be recognised and facilitated in terms of acquiring the skills that I would need to do the kind of medicine I wanted to, then I thought that this was an excellent opportunity and it swayed my hand in taking the pathway that I ultimately took.

The fourth year of the program provides trainees with further support and opportunities to consolidate their procedural skills. Upon completion of the RGTP and pending successful completion of college assessments, trainees will exit with a Fellowship of either the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM) and/or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice (FRACGP and FARGP) and with at least one advanced skill.
Becoming a trainee on the Rural Generalist Training Program

Since its inception in 2013, approximately 58 trainees have joined the RGTP, with 30 positions available for the 2016 clinical year. Whilst current trainees come from different backgrounds and have diverse clinical interests and aspirations, they all share a passion to practice procedural medicine within a rural context.

“The Rural Generalist Training Program is all about getting the right doctor in the right place with the right skills.”

GETTING ONTO THE RGTP

RGTP posts are aligned with the clinical year and positions for 2016 will commence in early February. Applications for the RGTP AST positions occur as part of the NSW statewide junior medical officer recruitment campaign, which commences in July 2015. Applications for the 2016 RGTP Foundation Year will be advertised later in September 2015 on the NSW Health Careers site.

As with other postgraduate medical training programs, entry onto the RGTP is competitive. Further information on application processes is available in the following section on applying for the RGTP.

GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING

All RGTP trainees are required, as a prerequisite to entry onto the RGTP, to be enrolled on the Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT), ACRRM independent pathway or RVTS. The AGPT program involves a three-year full-time commitment, or four years for rural and remote medicine registrars.

The AGPT program is designed to prepare trainees to be eligible for Fellowship of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM) and/or Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP). Both Fellowships are recognised general practice qualifications.

Some general practice training providers also offer training for the award of Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP), which is offered by the National Rural Faculty of the RACGP. This award aims to equip doctors to practice independently, safely and competently across a range of rural and remote settings in Australia. RGTP trainees who are completing the FRACGP will also be required to undertake the FARGP.

3 The clinical year refers to the standard 12 month period that junior doctors work, which in NSW commences in early February of each year.
In addition to support provided through the RGTP, general practice training providers will be an important source of information and support to trainees as they progress through the requirements for Fellowship.

At the time of publication, the Australian Government had commenced a tender process to select new training providers to deliver AGPT training within geographic training regions from 2016. It is expected that the new training providers will be announced in August 2015. Further information is available in the Australian General Practice Training Applicant Guide 2016.

CAREER ADVICE

One of the key features about medical practice within a rural or regional context is the breadth of opportunities available. Indeed this is one of the attributes that many senior clinicians report attracted them to rural general practice in the first instance.

Given the breadth and scope of opportunities, trainees have many choices to make about where and how they would like to practice rural medicine. On the RGTP, each training program is tailored to an individual trainee’s unique career and clinical aspirations, whilst at the same time meeting mandatory training and accreditation requirements.

Most trainees will benefit from seeking advice from senior rural practitioners about options available to them within the spectrum of rural medical practice. The Statewide Director, RGTP, the Regional Directors of Training, as well as GP Mentors (see section under Mentoring) are all important sources of advice and career support for trainees as they progress through the program.

Key contacts

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Further to the benefits of supervision, training and support provided through the general practice training providers, RGTP trainees enjoy additional advantages provided through the structure of the Rural Generalist Training Program.

This section provides details of training and professional development provided through the RGTP. Information about general practice training can be obtained through the relevant general practice training provider.

“The support we get on this program is fantastic.”

**ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

Each year an orientation program is provided to all RGTP trainees who are commencing on the training program. This orientation program is in addition to that provided through the general practice training providers (which trainees should also attend).

**INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS**

Each year Rural Doctors Network (RDN) convenes an intensive weekend workshop aimed at providing continuing professional development for procedural general practitioners working in rural communities. The focus of the workshop, which alternate year about, is either anaesthetics or obstetrics.

RGTP trainees may be eligible for financial assistance to support attendance at these workshops. Further information can be obtained by contacting HETI program staff.

**EDUCATION SESSIONS**

Regional Directors of Training are responsible for the delivery of an education program specifically directed at RGTP trainees, with a focus on topics relevant to rural and remote procedural general practice. These education sessions are delivered via webinars held at a regular time each month and are in addition to the education sessions provided through the general practice training providers. These sessions are focused on clinical case presentations highlighting topics relevant to rural hospital practice.

**MENTORING**

The mentoring program within the RGTP is designed to provide trainees with professional support, within the rural context as they make the transition toward independent clinical practice. It is intended to support trainees over the course of their training as well as during the initial post training/fellowship phase.

The mentoring program aims to match trainees and mentors in order to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion on a wide range of professional and personal issues relating to working in rural general practice.

In order to support the mentoring program, workshops for mentors and trainees are run annually. A mentoring guide (pictured) has also been developed to provide an educational resource for both mentors and trainees.
EXTERNAL COURSES

Many externally run education courses, relevant to RGTP trainees, are available through medical colleges and other training organisations. These include the Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO), Advanced Life Support (ALS) and the Early Management of Severe Trauma, (EMST) and Emergency Life Support (ELS).

In some cases, trainees will be required to complete prescribed courses as part of Fellowship prerequisites. Information about these requirements are detailed in the relevant College handbook. In other cases, trainees may wish to consolidate specific knowledge and skills relevant to their procedural general practice.

The RGTP has some additional funding to provide financial support to eligible trainees to assist with participation on approved external courses. The level of support and funding available is determined on an annual basis. Further information is provided through HETI staff.

SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

All RGTP trainees have access to support and advice from experienced procedural general practitioners and HETI program staff for the duration of their training, in addition to that provided by the general practice training providers.

“From a collegiate point of view, they get together with other trainees who are in similar situations… who they can get to know over the course of the program and catch up with or even just ring up from time to time for peer support.”

STATEWIDE DIRECTOR, RGTP

The Statewide Director, an experienced rural general practitioner, is responsible for providing strategic advice and leadership to the program. A key role is to ensure alignment of the RGTP with service requirements and workforce needs and future employment opportunities in the rural LHDs.

The Statewide Director meets with trainees on a regular basis, usually at orientation and intensive skills workshops but is also available to be contacted at other times for advice and support.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF TRAINING

Regional Directors of Training, also experienced rural general practitioners, are responsible for organising the RGTP at the regional level. To this end, rural NSW has been functionally split into two regions, ‘north’ and ‘south’, with each being assigned responsibility for a region.

The Regional Directors of Training are the local contacts for RGTP trainees working within their region. The Regional Directors of Training also organise the webinar education series, delivered on a statewide basis. They facilitate the interface between the hospital and community placements and work with trainees to map the trainee pathway throughout the duration of the RGTP.

PEER SUPPORT

Over the length of the RGTP, trainees are provided opportunities to meet with other RGTP trainees, network and attend training together. This has an additional benefit for RGTP trainees in fostering peer support and the development of collegiate relationships that have the capacity to extend well beyond the duration of the training program itself.
Training partners

A number of organisations contribute to the RGTP. Whilst the extent of involvement of these training partners will vary across the duration of the training program, all share a commitment to ensuring that trainees receive high quality training, support and supervision. This section provides some information about the roles and responsibilities of the other organisations involved in the RGTP.

LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS

Rural LHDs are involved in the RGTP. Their role is to assist in the recruitment and employ trainees during their Foundation and AST years. LHDs also ensure accreditation requirements of the respective accrediting bodies are met. Each year rural LHDs will identify AST opportunities in line with workforce and clinical service plans.

LHDs will also be responsible for ensuring that rural generalist trainees undertaking their AST year are integrated into the specialty department during their hospital-based employment. Rural generalist trainees will have access to the same training opportunities and clinical experiences as their peer specialty trainees. This includes participation in the after-hours roster and on-call arrangements.

GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING PROVIDERS

From 2016, new geographic boundaries for 11 training regions to deliver the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) programme have been developed.

At the time of publication, the Australian Government had commenced a tender process to appoint new regionally based training organisations. It is expected that these organisations will work with existing RTPs during a transition period in the latter part of 2015 and take full responsibility for the management and coordination of general practice training from the commencement of 2016. Further information on the new arrangements is available on the AGPT website: www.agpt.com.au

OTHER TRAINING PROVIDERS

In addition to the existing RTPs (and subsequent new training organisations), there are other training pathways for rural generalists. NSW trainees enrolled in either of the following pathways may also be eligible to apply for the RGTP.

Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)

The RVTS provides a vocational training program for doctors in remote and isolated communities and Aboriginal community controlled health services. Further information about this program is available at www.rvts.org.au

ACRRM Independent Pathway

The Independent Pathway is a full-fee pathway leading to Fellowship with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. Further information about this pathway is available at www.acrrm.org.au
RURAL DOCTORS NETWORK

The NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN) is a non-Government, not-for-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and the NSW Ministry of Health. RDN supports and assists communities in rural and remote NSW to establish and maintain medical services. It does this through a range of programs focused on medical workforce and support of doctors and other healthcare providers working in rural communities.

RDN hosts a number of professional development activities, including the provision of an annual weekend workshop, alternating year about, between anaesthetics and obstetrics. All RGTP trainees are encouraged to attend these workshops, particularly during their AST year. Further information about the workshops and RDN can be found at www.nswrdn.com.au

COLLEGES

In addition to the general practice colleges, RGTP trainees will also have contact with either the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RANZCOG) if undertaking advanced skills training in obstetrics, or the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) if undertaking advanced skills training in anaesthetics. Both colleges will be an important source on information and ongoing support to RGTP trainees, in addition to the support provided through their primary general practice college.
Beyond the Rural Generalist Training Program

RECOGNITION OF ADVANCED SKILLS TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING

Trainees who have successfully completed the AST year at PGY3+, but are still undertaking community general practice training will be strongly encouraged and supported to obtain a position with a local health service to enable them to practice in the area of advanced skills training.

In order to practice those procedural skills independently, trainees will be credentialed in that particular procedural discipline. The RGTP and their general practice training provider will assist in identifying practices and hospitals where the use of their AST can be developed.

Credentialing is the formal process undertaken by health organisations that recognises a medical practitioner’s particular clinical experience, skills and qualifications and provides approval for a doctor to provide those particular clinical services in a given healthcare organisation.

It is acknowledged that those doctors completing AST requirements may require a period of skills consolidation in a supported environment as they make the transition toward independent practice. In making recommendations about clinical privileges, the credentialing process reviews the clinical experience, skills and qualifications of the individual practitioner, taking into account the context of the healthcare organisation in which those services are being provided, including access to additional clinical support from more experienced practitioners.

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

A fundamental tenet of the RGTP is to match clinical service needs with career aspirations of doctors. As trainees progress through the program, they will receive information and advice to assist them in making career decisions.
Once trainees have completed Fellowship requirements, they will still need to apply for senior medical positions via a merit selection appointment process, but it is hoped that by tailoring the program, better alignment between individual doctor’s career aspirations and future workforce needs will be achieved. Further information about current rural general practice vacancies can be found at www.nswrdn.com.au

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Trainees who have achieved Fellowship are required to engage in continuing professional development activities, as a requirement of their ongoing medical registration and college affiliation. For rural generalists this includes general practice as well as the specialty discipline of the advanced skill.

CPD requirements for general practice are outlined and administered by the relevant primary College (either RACGP or ACRRM). CPD requirements for advanced procedural practice are set through the relevant specialty college (either RANZCOG or ANZCA) and overseen by the CCOG or JCCA, respectively.
Applying to the Rural Generalist Training Program

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

For 2016, successful applicants will be recruited at one of two entry points along the training pathway, either as Foundation Year trainees or as AST year trainees. Separate recruitment processes will be undertaken for these two entry points.

Applications for the 2016 Foundation Year will occur in mid to late September 2015. One statewide advertisement will be placed on the NSW Health Careers site. To be kept informed of Foundation Year developments and timeframes, please register your interest by sending an email to: karyn.sherman@health.nsw.gov.au

Applications for the 2016 AST Year will open 23 July 2015 and will be advertised on the NSW Health Careers site.

Applicants will be required to complete an application and provide supporting documentation. Applicants will receive confirmation by a system generated email that their application has been received.

This section provides information on the application process for the NSW RGTP only. Applicants to the RGTP should be aware that the eligibility criteria for the RGTP includes being accepted or waiting for acceptance onto a general practice training program. Continuation on the program is contingent on acceptance to a formal general practice training program.

Applications for general practice training are administered through the federal Department of Health. Applicants should refer to www.gpet.com.au for further information about applying for general practice training.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants must have successfully completed the postgraduate year one (PGY1 or Intern Year) and be eligible for general registration with the Medical Board of Australia. Entry to the program will be from the PGY2 year or beyond to align with selection into general practice training through either the RACGP or the RACRRM.

To be eligible to apply to the RGTP program, applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Be eligible for general registration with the Medical Board of Australia
2. Demonstrate a commitment to rural practice and rural communities including an intention to provide procedural services in a rural community
3. Be accepted to or waiting for acceptance to one of the General Practice training programs as follows:
   a. Australian General Practice Training (AGPT)
   b. Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS), or the
   c. Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACCRM) Independent Pathway.

Recruitment for trainees commencing the Foundation Year in 2016 will be held during September 2015. Refer to the RGTP website for further details.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Two centralised recruitment panels will be convened, one for each region (north and south), for the 2016 AST interviews. Prior to interview applicants will be asked to nominate preferences for training location and advanced skill.

Foundation year interviews for the 2016 intake will also be by centralised panel later in the year.

Positions within each region will be assigned according to preference matching of candidates in order of the selection ranking. First round offers will be made from 16 September 2015. Successful applicants will be provided with a written offer and asked to accept or decline the RGTP position within a stipulated timeframe, usually 48 hours.
I am convinced that most people who try it actually really enjoy working in rural practice.

PREPARING FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligibility – all applicants should self-assess their eligibility according to the criteria listed under the eligibility criteria. All applicants should be either currently enrolled or have lodged an application for general practice training for 2016 with AGPT.

Supporting documentation – all applicants will be required to provide evidence of primary medical degree, current enrolment in general practice training program and citizenship/permanent residency.

Referees – all applicants will be required to provide details of two referees.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADVANCED SKILLS TRAINING POSTS

RGTP trainees who have completed the Foundation Year of the RGTP may progress to either community general practice training (organised through the relevant general practice training provider) or advanced skills training. Eligibility requirements for progression to advanced skills training posts were outlined in an earlier section (refer to page 13).
LATERAL ENTRY

Whilst the majority of trainees will join the RGTP at the commencement of their general practice training as Foundation Year trainees, there will remain some limited provision for lateral entry at the AST Year, pending availability of positions and eligibility of the applicant. Priority for appointment to the AST posts will be given to existing eligible RGTP trainees. Vacant AST positions will be advertised separately should they become available. Doctors will need to be already accepted and undertaking general practice training to be eligible for lateral entry to AST positions.

“The rural generalist training program has provided me with a pathway to practicing medicine in a rural community.”

Frequently asked questions

How do I apply for the RGTP to join in the Foundation Year?


How do I apply for the RGTP to join in the AST Year?

Positions for the 2016 RGTP AST year will be advertised as part of the NSW state-wide annual medical recruitment campaign that opens on 23 July 2015. Applicants can be lodged online through the NSW Health Careers site https://nswjmo.erecruit.com.au/jobvac.asp

Do I have to have completed my internship to lodge an application for the following clinical year?

No. Applicants who wish to commence in the RGTP as Foundation Year Trainees as PGY2 doctors, will apply to both RGTP and the AGTP during their intern year. A condition of entry onto the RGTP is enrolment with either RACGP or ACRRM. Offers are made for the RGTP following confirmation of acceptance onto the general practice training program with either College.

Do I have to be on a general practice training program?

Yes. Eligibility for the RGTP is on the basis that the trainee is either currently enrolled or for new GP trainees, in the process of applying for general practice training with either the RACGP or ACRRM. Offers are made for the RGTP following confirmation of acceptance onto the general practice training program with either College.

I am enrolled in another College. Can I still apply to the RGTP?

All applicants for the RGTP must be enrolled or have an application pending with either of the general practice colleges. Applicants from other college training programs are not eligible for the RGTP, unless they are also concurrently enrolled with either the RACGP or ACRRM.
Further information

**HETI PROGRAM STAFF**

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<tr>
<th>MR CRAIG SHIELDS</th>
<th>MRS KARYN SHERMAN</th>
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<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>Program Officer</td>
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**ACRONYMS**

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Statewide Council

The following is the 2015/16 membership for the NSW Rural Generalist Training Program

Statewide Council

Dr Richard Abbott  
Statewide Director, NSW Rural Generalist Training Program, HETI

Associate Professor Kathleen Atkinson  
Director of Medical Services, Far West Local Health District

Dr Louise Baker  
Rural Doctors' Association of NSW

Dr Ian Cameron  
Chief Executive Officer, NSW Rural Doctors Network

Dr Logan Carroll  
Director Prevocational Education and Training, Port Macquarie Base Hospital

Ms Dale Erwin  
Director Medical Workforce, Hunter New England Local Health District

Dr Charles Evill  
NSW Director, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

Dr Daniel Fry  
NSW Rural Generalist Training Program Trainee, 2015

Dr Tim Francis  
Medical Educator, North Coast GP Training

Dr Steve Howle  
Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Dr Linda Macpherson  
Medical Advisor, Workforce Planning and Development, NSW Ministry of Health

Ms Jodi Spencer  
Manager Medical Administration, Western NSW Local Health District

Dr David Woods  
NSW Rural Generalist Training Program Trainee, 2015
The NSW Rural Generalist Training Program provides a structured training pathway for junior doctors aiming to work in rural NSW as rural generalists or procedural general practitioners. The 2016 Prospectus contains essential information for potential applicants on the program, including information about participating rural LHDs, advanced skills training, the range of support and educational activities offered to RGTP trainees, application processes and contact details for seeking advice and further information.