

# Rural Regional Roundtable 2

## Responding to workforce pressures

This resource sheet provides a summary of the second Regional Rural Roundtable on 15 February 2022.

### Current state

Workforce was identified again as the greatest issue with COVID continuing to exacerbate these challenges.



### Policy approach

Keera Weise, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, presented on workforce.



The figure above captures the main entry and exit pathways of the public health workforce.

Data from 2020 indicates that:

- there are 135,000 employees equivalent to 100,500 FTE in the public health workforce
- 14,000 people left the public health workforce in 2020 with 9,000 resignations, 4,000 involuntary separations and 600 retirements.

Additionally:

- Workforce modelling for regional Victoria projects a 12.7% increase in health and social workforce to fill an additional 14,600 jobs by 2025.

Public policy interventions will be required to grow the public health workforce and meet current and anticipated service demands.

### Possible policy interventions

#### Domestic training pathways

Members heard from Nick Shaw, CEO Alpine Health, on its localised registered training program. The innovative training program focuses on creating local skills pathways through accreditation to address local workforce pressures. A full case study will be circulated in a later report.

#### International recruitment

Case study presented by Juan Paolo Legaspi, Manager of Policy and Advocacy, highlighted key policy enablers for skilled migration:

- Prioritise healthcare as a target sector (regional specialisation)
- Simplify the application process
- Whole-of-government retention strategy.

#### Flexible workforce models

Tom Symondson, VHA CEO, spoke briefly to ‘how can we optimise the current workforce pool’:

- Repurposing existing staff. New models of care, creating innovations in service delivery.
- A successful case example is RIPERNS – which is used throughout rural and bush nursing stations as a flexible role.

### Key policy considerations & reflections

- Priority for regional and rural areas
- Access to housing
- Skills recognition and pathways
- Priority migration for healthcare workforce
- Competitive salaries and incentives.

### Want to contribute to this policy area?

If you are interested in supporting policy development in-between the larger roundtable events, please contact our Rural and Regional Policy Lead: [Keera.weise@vha.org.au](mailto:Keera.weise@vha.org.au)