



STRONGER RURAL HEALTH STRATEGY

Improved Workforce Planning Tool

Under the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, the Health Demand and Supply Utilisation Patterns Planning (HeaDS UPP) tool will be a single, integrated, quality source of health workforce and services data. The tool will provide sophisticated and comprehensive evidence to inform workforce planning and analysis. It will use newly defined geographic catchments to reflect where people live and where they access health services, as well as where health practitioners and services are located.

Investment

An investment of \$14.4 million over four years from 2018-19 will support the creation of the new HeaDS UPP tool.

Workforce distribution

Although Australia has plenty of doctors, they are not well distributed according to local need. There is currently limited ability to measure and analyse the health service needs of a community, and apply the right resources to improve workforce distribution.

The HeaDS UPP Tool will provide a single source of quality data and evidence for workforce planners at the local, jurisdictional and national levels to inform decisions on where services and workforce are needed.

Users of the tool will be able to visually zoom in on a geographical region to view health workforce and service usage information about that area.

Quality data for workforce planners

The tool will bring together important source information such as Medicare Benefits Schedule data, Admitted Patient Care data, and Royal Flying Doctor Service data, and map them according to geographical regions, including the newly created GP Catchments areas.

By mapping this source data, the tool will allow planners to view health workforce information about particular geographic areas. The tool will be updated every six to 12 months with new information and functionality.

The newly created General Practice Catchments are a custom designed geography, constructed using the Australian Statistical Geographical Standard and based on a number of factors including patient flows, workforce, rurality, and topography. There are 829 non-overlapping GP catchment areas.

Rural Workforce Agencies will use the tool in their assessment of applications from overseas trained doctors under the *Visas for General Practitioners – targeting areas of doctor shortage* initiative.

Tool availability

The tool will be available to a variety of government and non-government organisations involved in health workforce planning, including:

- Rural Workforce Agencies
- Primary Health Networks
- Local Health Districts
- Medical Colleges
- State and Territory governments.

Data privacy

Data privacy will be a key focus in the design and management of the tool. Strict access controls and protocols will be in place for each approved organisation and all will align with Privacy Legislation.

Collaboration

The HeaDS UPP Tool will become a single source of information for government and stakeholders that will improve consistency of the evidence base used to inform workforce planning, policy and program development, monitoring and evaluation activities.

The tool will also allow and encourage collaboration across parts of the health system and increase confidence in government spending.

Further information

Updates on progress of the reform and further information:

- Department of Health's website www.health.gov.au