The Senate

Community Affairs References Committee

The factors affecting the supply of health services and medical professionals in rural areas

© Commonwealth of Australia 2012

ISBN 978-1-74229-676-0

Secretariat

Dr Ian Holland (Committee Secretary)

Ms Toni Matulick (Committee Secretary)

Mr Gerry McNally (Principal Research Officer)

Ms Sandra Kennedy (Principal Research Officer)

Ms Callie Regan (Principal Research Officer)

Ms Janice Webster (Senior Research Officer)

Mr Tim Hillman (Administrative Officer)

Ms Lauren Carnevale (Administrative Officer)

Ms Carol Stewart (Administrative Officer)

PO Box 6100 Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Phone: 02 6277 3515 Fax: 02 6277 5829

E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Internet: www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ca_ctte/index.htm

This document was produced by the Senate Community Affairs Committee Secretariat and printed by the Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

43rd Parliament

Members

Senator Rachel Siewert, Chair

Senator Claire Moore, Deputy Chair

Senator Judith Adams (to 23 March 2012)

Senator Sue Boyce

Senator Carol Brown

Senator Carol Brown

Senator Bridget McKenzie

Senator Dean Smith (from 9 May 2012)

Western Australia, AG

Queensland, ALP

Victoria, NATS

Western Australia, LP

Substitute members for this inquiry

Senator Gary Humphries
for Senator Judith Adams
(from 23 March to 31 March 2012)
Senator Helen Kroger
for Senator Sue Boyce
(from 19 to 20 October 2011)

Australian Capital Territory, LP
Victoria, LP

Participating members

Senator Fiona Nash

Senator Richard Di Natale

Senator David Fawcett

New South Wales, NATS

Victoria, AG

South Australia, LP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Membership of committee	111
Abbreviations	vii
Executive summary	xi
List of Recommendations	xxi
Chapter 1	1
The factors affecting the supply of health services and medical profession rural areas	
Terms of Reference	1
Conduct of the inquiry	1
Structure of the report	2
Chapter 2	3
The distribution of medical, nursing and allied health professionals Australia	
Attempts to measure the adequacy of the rural health workforce	3
Current distribution of the medical workforce in Australia	6
Impacts of the maldistribution of the medical workforce	16
Causal factors leading to workforce shortages in non-metropolitan areas	19
Chapter 3	25
The nature of the medical profession in rural areas	25
Medical Specialisms	25
Rural Generalists pathways	30
Indigenous Health	35
Chapter 4	39
Attempts to address the rural medical skills deficit	39
Government-led actions and policies impacting on doctor numbers	39
Government-led initiatives to address the shortage of Allied Health Profes and nurses in non-metropolitan areas	

Telemedicine	51
Up-skilling the existing workforce	54
The efficacy of efforts to increase the rural health workforce	59
Chapter 5	63
Australian Standard Geographical Classification for Remoteness Areas	63
Introduction	63
Need for a geographical statistical classification system	63
Geographical classification systems	64
Australian Standard Geographical Classification–Remoteness Area	65
Incentives for GPs to work outside major cities	69
Use of the ASGC-RA to determine incentives	71
Other classification systems	77
Chapter 6	83
The role of universities and medical schools	83
Current pathways into rural medicine	83
Quota of students from a rural background	85
A multifactorial problem	90
Student Entry requirements	93
Teaching and mentoring places for medical students	95
Accommodation issues during clinical placements	100
Chapter 7	105
Medicare Locals	105
Key issues raised during the inquiry	107
APPENDIX 1	119
Submissions and Additional Information received by the Committee	
APPENDIX 2	
Public Hearings	127
I IIIIII. I IEAI IIIYA	

