



Pathways to Progress: Healthcare Access in Rural Victoria

Future Workforce:
Building the pipeline

Doctor What? Doctor Where? A podcast to inspire the future rural workforce

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The “Doctor What? Doctor Where? Stories of Rural Medicine” podcast explores the benefits of living and training in regional and rural locations. It features medical professionals, junior doctors and medical students from rural and regional communities sharing their experiences and insights, and revealing the sometimes unexpected opportunities made possible when you live, work and train rurally.

Professionally produced and available on all major podcast streaming platforms, it is a collaborative initiative of Monash University’s Gippsland and North West Victorian Regional Training Hubs. By exploring motivations to pursue a career away from the city, through the voices and experiences of those doing it (relatable near-peers), the podcast exposes students and junior doctors to the breadth and scope of opportunities available in a rural and regional areas. This feeds into a supportive pipeline by inspiring and guiding the future rural health workforce.

The podcast’s first two seasons comprise 47 episodes to date, including a 5-episode special summer series (2020-21) which was guest produced by Deakin University’s Western Victoria Regional Training Hub. “Doctor What? Doctor Where?” features guests not just from Gippsland and North West Victoria, but sometimes from across the state. Episodes have covered a range of topics such as mentoring, skill building, research, rural lifestyles, and episodes focused on specific specialties and training pathways available rurally, including two popular episodes on rural General Practice and Rural Generalism (1,280 plays). Challenges include growing the listener base through promotion, planning impactful topics to explore and sourcing interviewee talent.

As at October 2023, the podcast had 16,000+ listens, with 436 followers on Spotify subscribed to be notified of new episodes. It reaches those in age ranges which typically correspond to the medical student and junior doctor years, with 4% of listeners aged 18-22, 54% aged 23-27, and 24% aged 28-34. While the majority (74%) are in Australia (and 54% of those in Victoria), it has reached an international audience, with 12% in the USA and the remainder across a range of countries (<2% each).

Students have said the podcast helped ‘demystify’ rural medicine, leading them to more strongly consider or feel more comfortable going into, rural clinical placements. Anecdotal evidence from interns and junior doctors has indicated that it has played a part in influencing some to apply to live, work and train rurally in the short-term as well as with a view to longer-term rural career plans post-Fellowship.