



2023 Census Summary

June, 2024

The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV)

The vision of the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria is for all Victorian communities to be supported with equitable access to a high-quality health workforce that promotes positive health outcomes. RWAV's purpose is to provide effective and customised health workforce solutions for rural and First Nations communities in Victoria.

RWAV delivers a comprehensive range of health workforce programs and services in rural and regional Victoria through funding from both the Australian and Victorian governments. In doing so, RWAV has established and maintained collaborative working arrangements and networks with key health workforce stakeholders in rural and regional Victoria.

The Victorian Health Workforce Needs Assessment

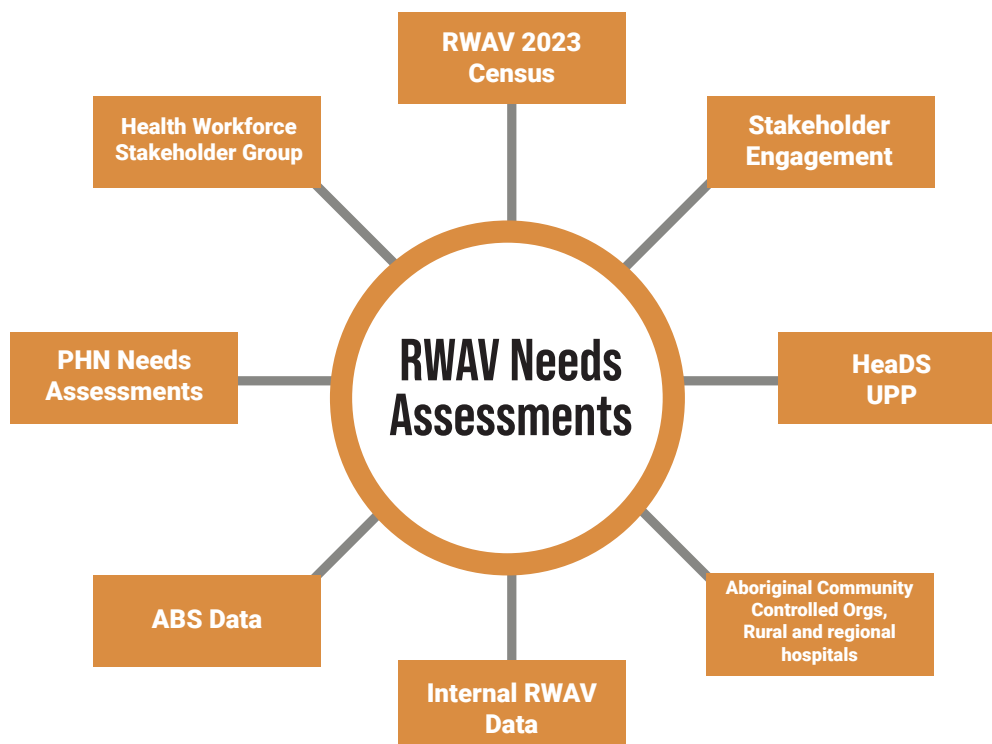
The purpose of the Victorian Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) is to identify the key issues affecting the access, quality and sustainability needs of rural, regional and First Nations communities and the health workforce that support these communities in Victoria. The HWNA is a data-driven document which is developed from a series of data sets, including; The Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census (administered by RWAV), health workforce data and engagements with stakeholders.

If you would like to contribute and provide your insights into the next needs assessment or if you would like to know more about our Needs Assessment, please contact us at Data@rwav.com.au.

Need Assessment Methodology

RWAV conducted a needs assessment between August 2023 and March 2024.

This needs assessment used data from:



- **The RWAV 2023 Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census (RHW Census)**

The RWAV 2023 Census is an online Census sent to health professionals in rural and remote regions of Victoria. The survey was optional and confidential for the participants and consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions on health workforce access, quality and sustainability.

- **The Victorian Health Priority Analysis**

A thorough analysis of population health data from the Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) from Torrens University Australia was performed to identify health needs and unmet health demands of the population. This analysis was performed at the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 structure of **Statistical Area 3 (SA3)**.

The analysis considered many factors, including: socio-demographic information, lifestyle factors, disease incidence, screening rates, hospital admissions and years of life lost.

- **RWAV Stakeholder Engagement**

RWAV conducts consultations with external stakeholders to evaluate RWAV programs and assess health workforce needs. The consultations are a short-form survey administered to stakeholders in a face-to-face, virtual or phone format. The goal of the engagement is to gather information about the community health needs, including local epidemiology, patient wait times and barriers to accessing services. This information contributes to RWAVs understanding specific challenges that communities face.

- **Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Data**

Data identified in this Needs Assessment was triangulated with confidential counts of number of health professionals by SA3 location (HeaDS UPP) and the number of services in an SA3 area (Healthmap).

Findings

Census Representation

Sample Size: 584

(represents a 25%
increase from 2022)

Response Rates by PHN Region

Murray	38%
Western Victoria	30%
Gippsland	22%
Metro	10%



Allied Health Professionals lead in census participation, closely followed by GPs



The **majority of health professionals** work for **public hospitals**.



55% of participants are employed **full-time**.

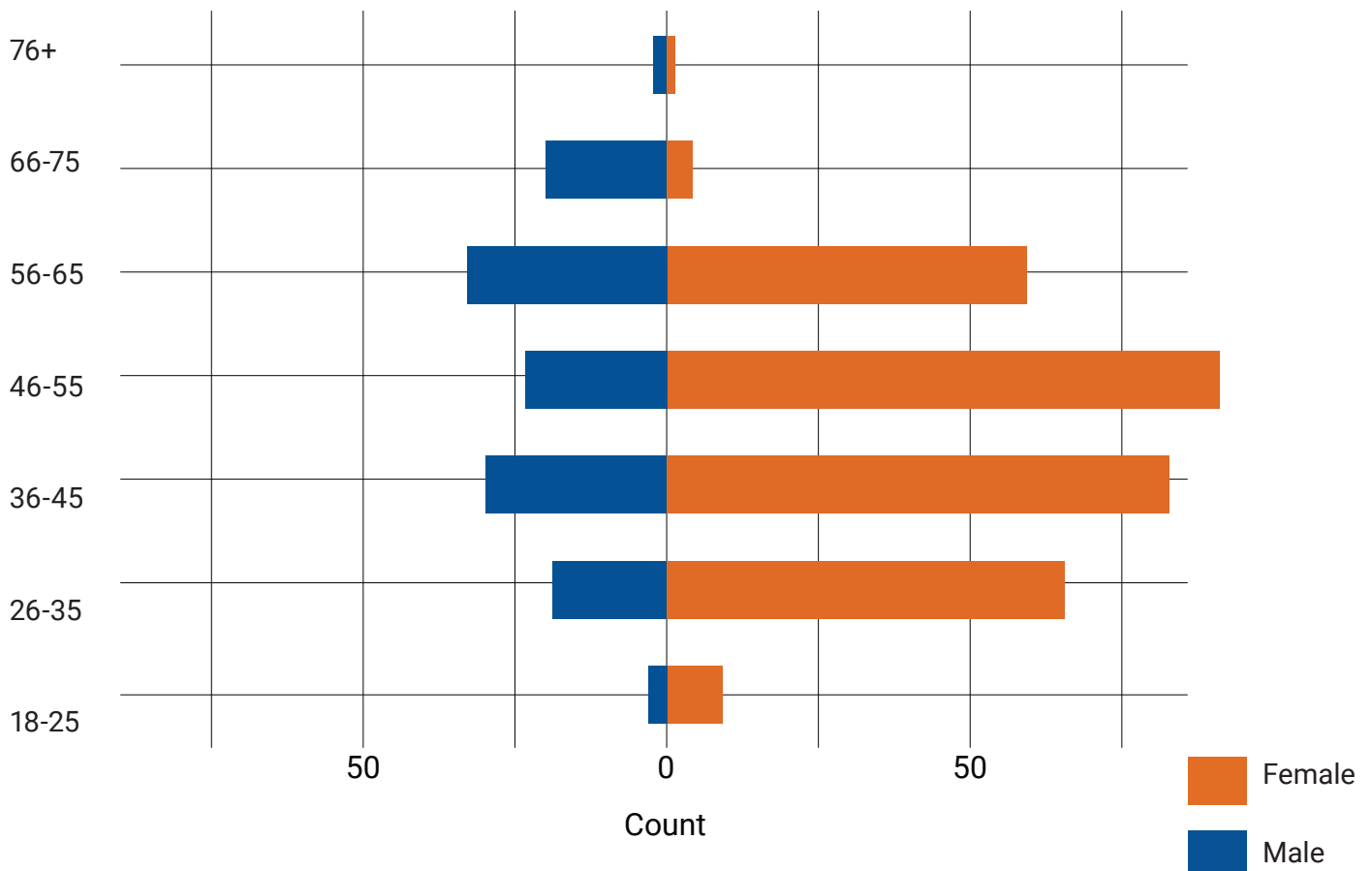


56% received **cultural safety training** in the last three years.



Predominantly **female** and well-distributed across **age groups**.

Age Category and Sex of Respondents



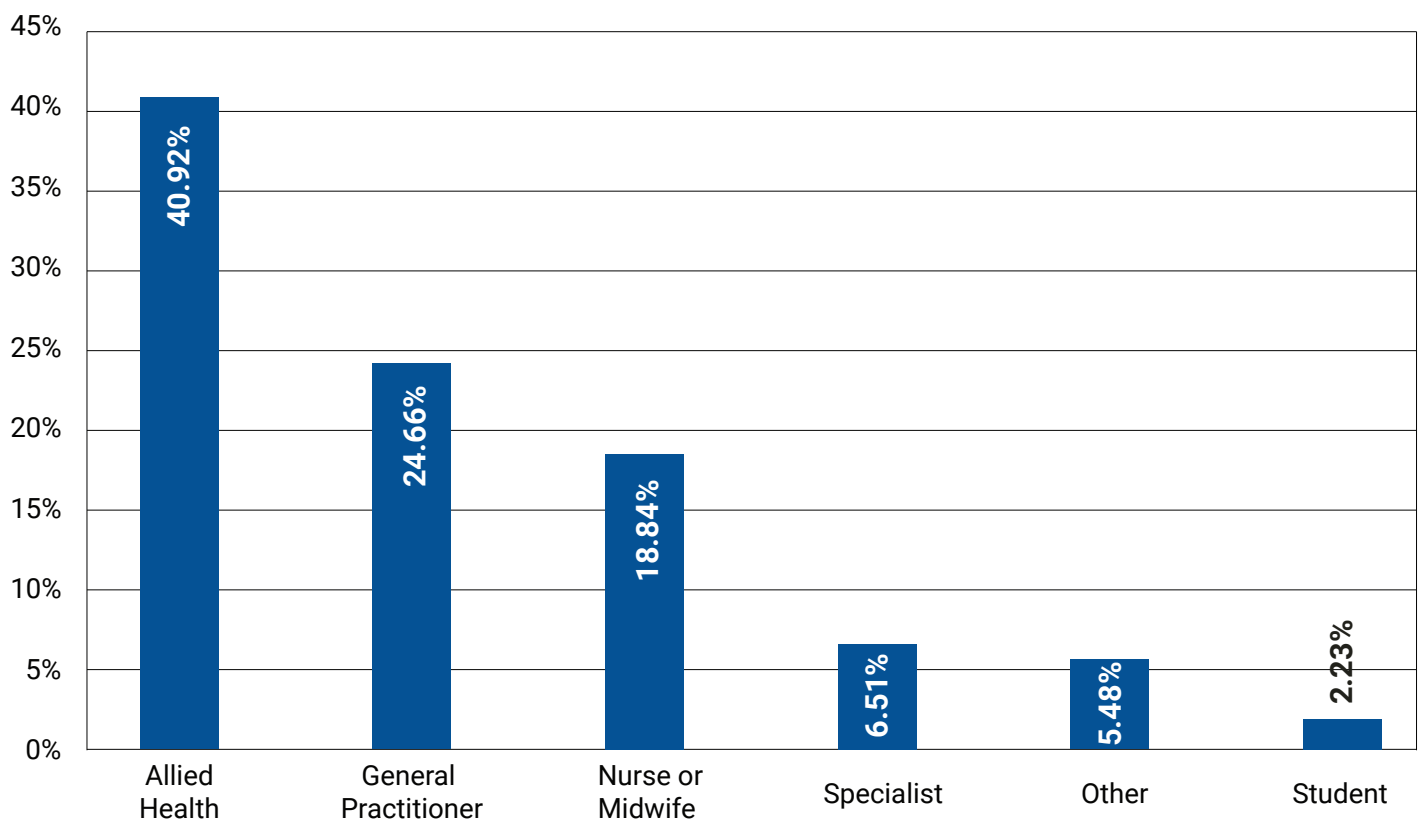
Profession breakdown

o The highest number of Allied Health responses were from:

- ◇ Physiotherapist
- ◇ Psychologist
- ◇ Occupational Therapist
- ◇ Social Worker
- ◇ Speech Pathologist
- ◇ Pharmacist
- ◇ Podiatrist
- ◇ Dietitian
- ◇ Exercise Physiologist
- ◇ Counsellor

o Other includes academic, administration, management, training/educator and public health/health promotion roles.

Profession Response %



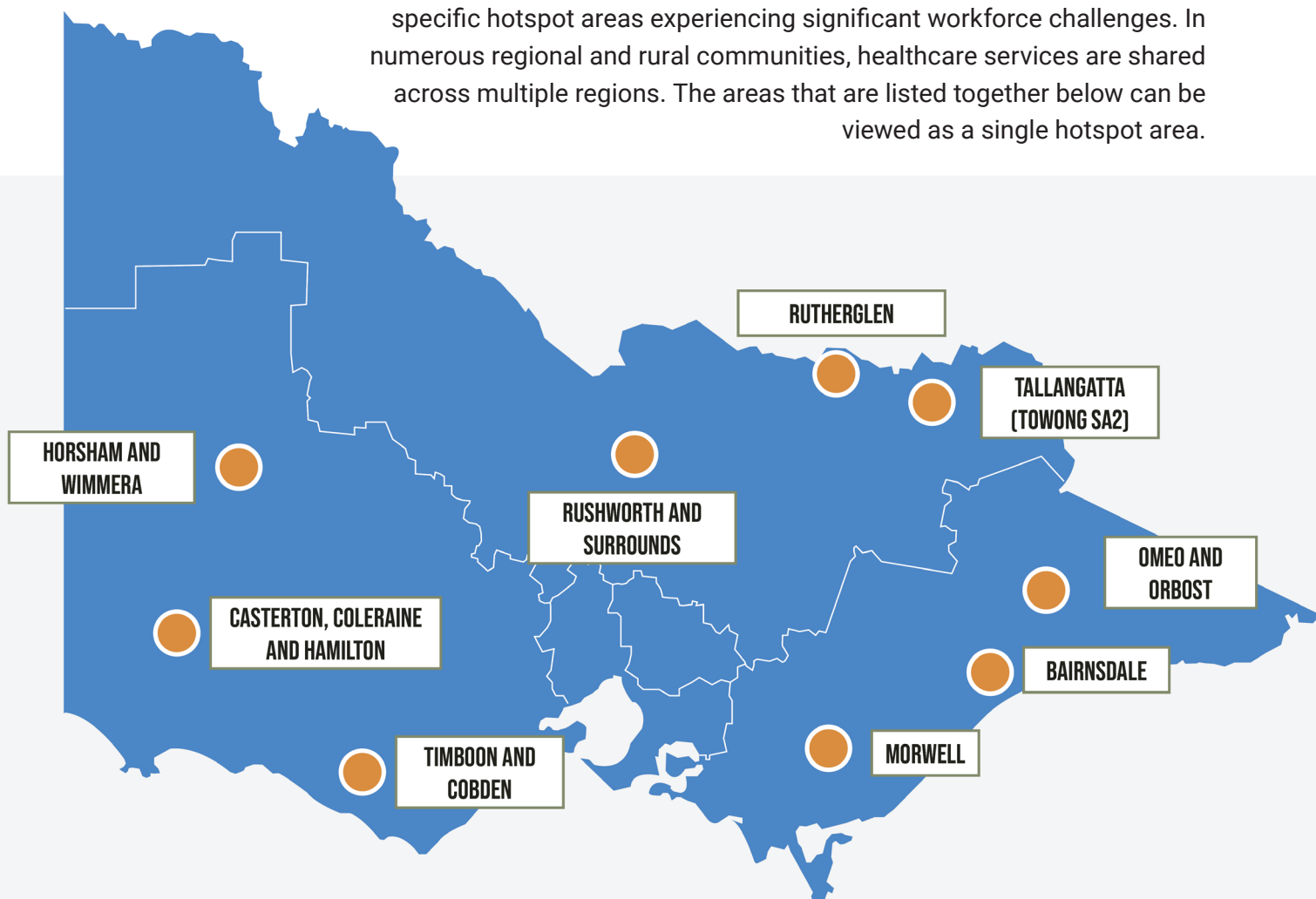
Top Occupational Needs

Across rural and regional Victoria, RWAV has identified the top health workforce occupation needs, and are reflected across the three rural PHN regions.



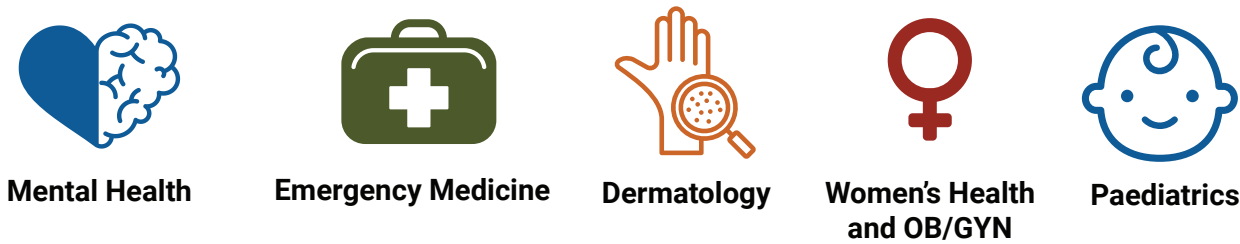
Priority Hotspots 2024 - 2025 FY

Through collaboration with the Rural Victorian Primary Health Networks (PHNs), and the RWAV workforce stakeholder groups, RWAV has identified specific hotspot areas experiencing significant workforce challenges. In numerous regional and rural communities, healthcare services are shared across multiple regions. The areas that are listed together below can be viewed as a single hotspot area.



Top 5 Additional Skills to Meet Community Need

The top five addition skills to meet community needs as identified through the census:

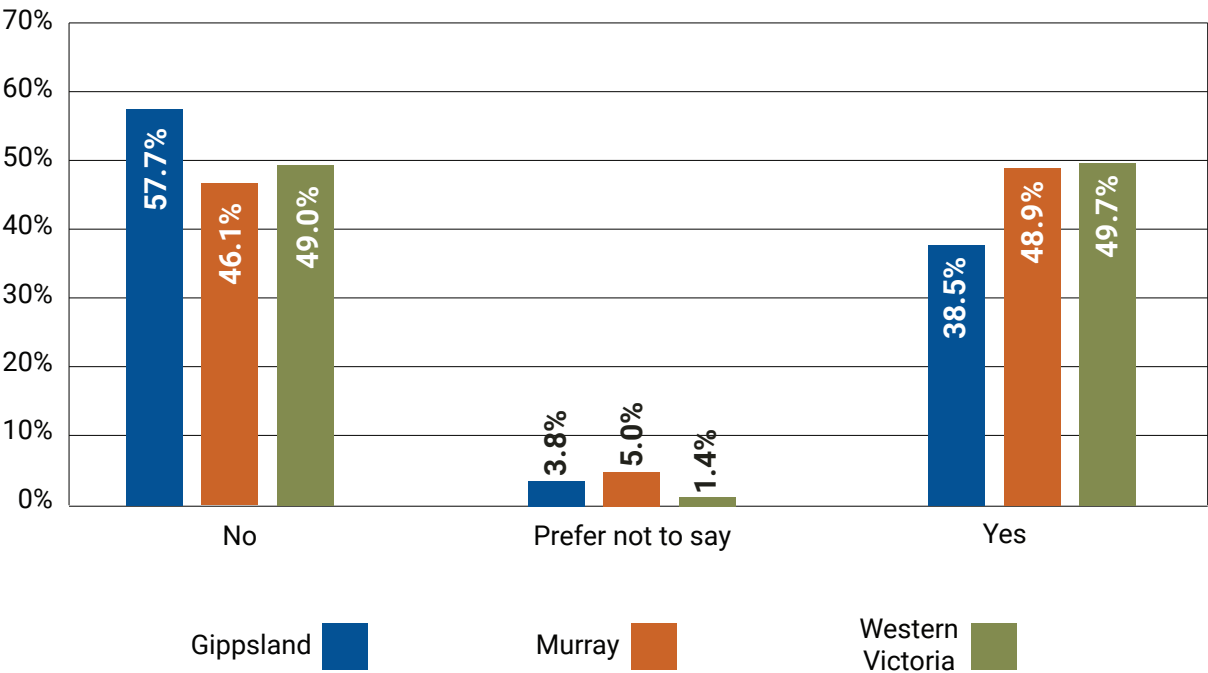


Key Issues Faced by the rural health workforce:

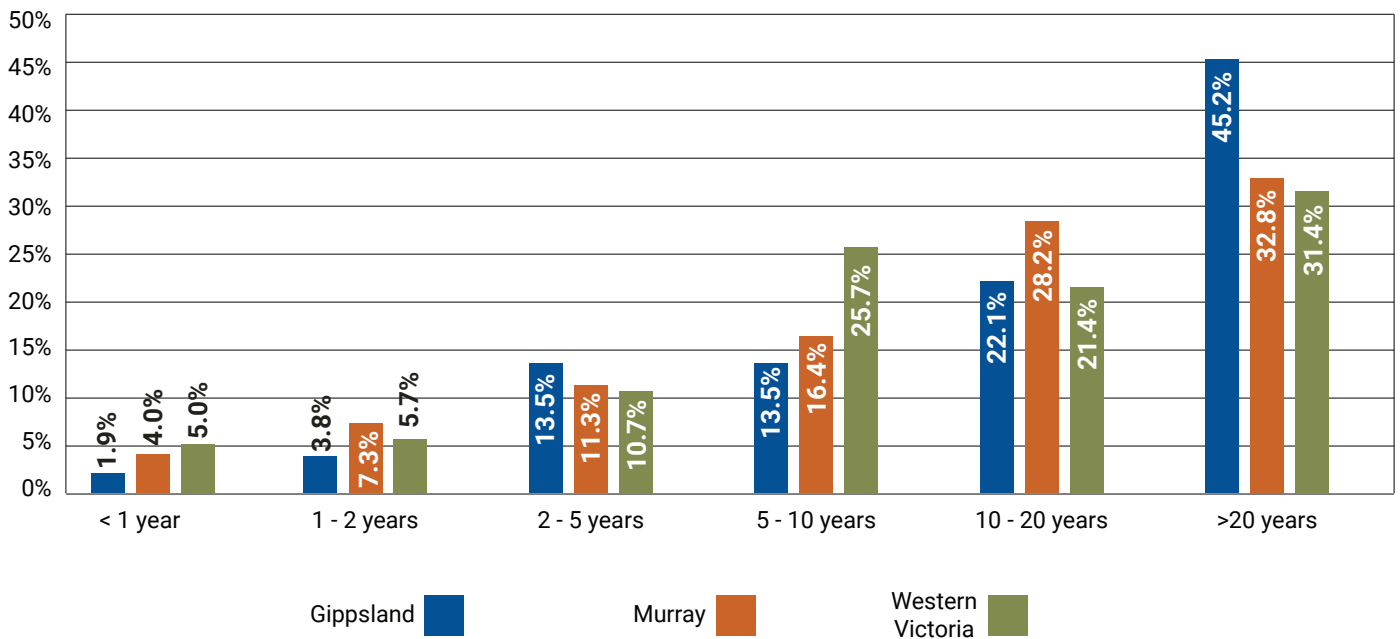
- Lack of public and social services like schools, childcare and housing are a major inhibitor for workforce to move to some areas in regional and rural Victoria.
- Continued understaffing puts pressure on both existing staff as well new staff that can lead to further shedding of the workforce.

Rural Health Workforce Intentions

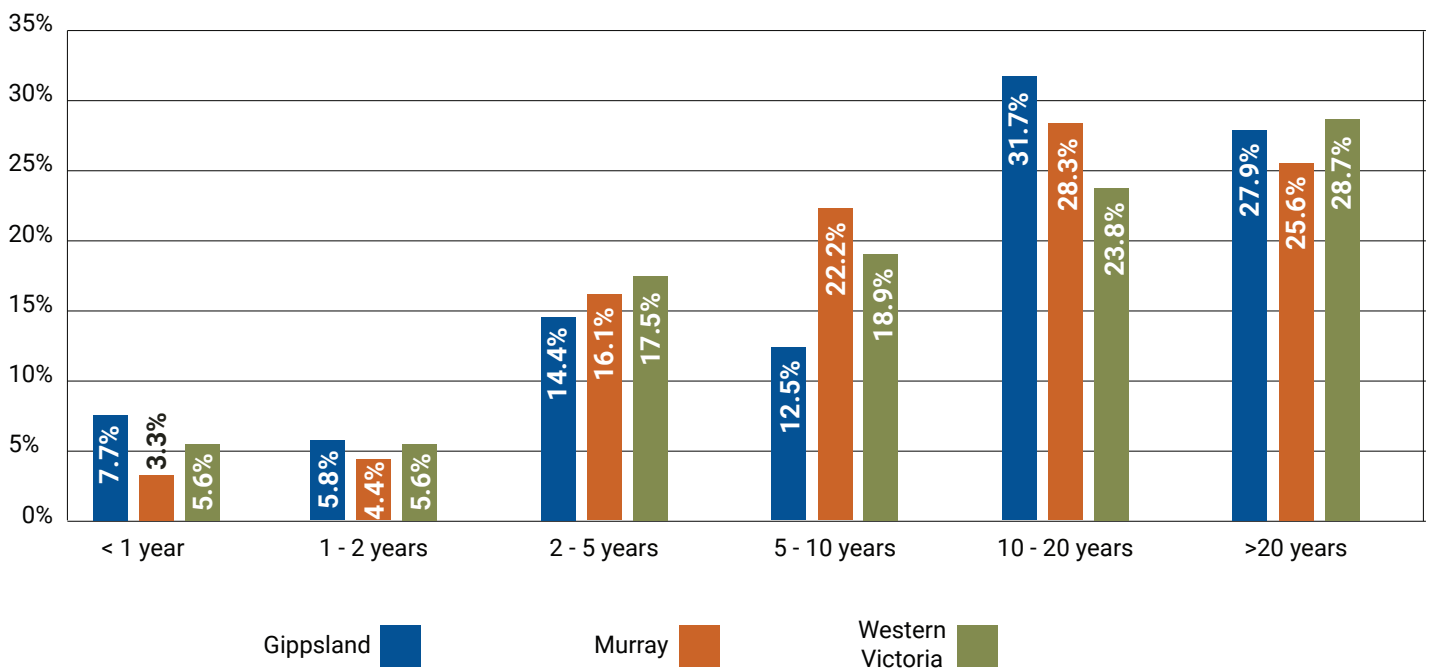
Have you considered leaving the Victorian rural/regional workforce in the past 12 years



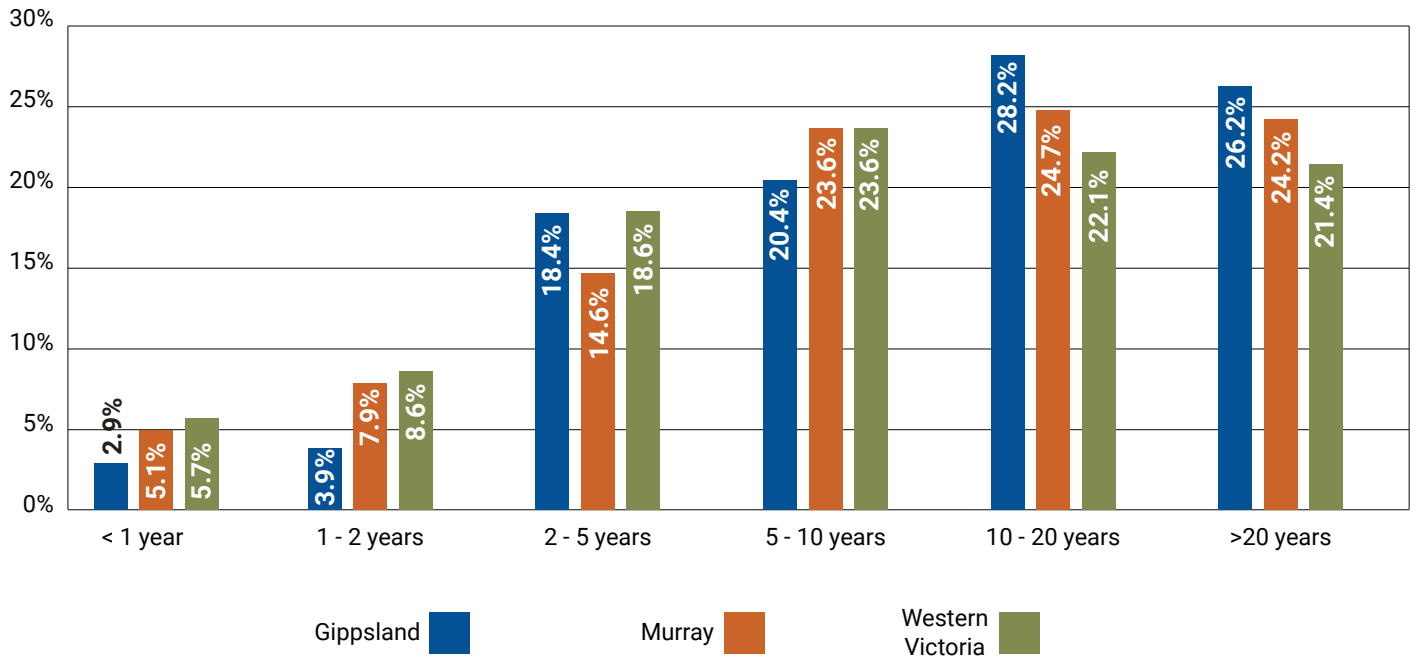
When do you plan on retiring from clinical practice



How long have you worked in rural/regional Victoria



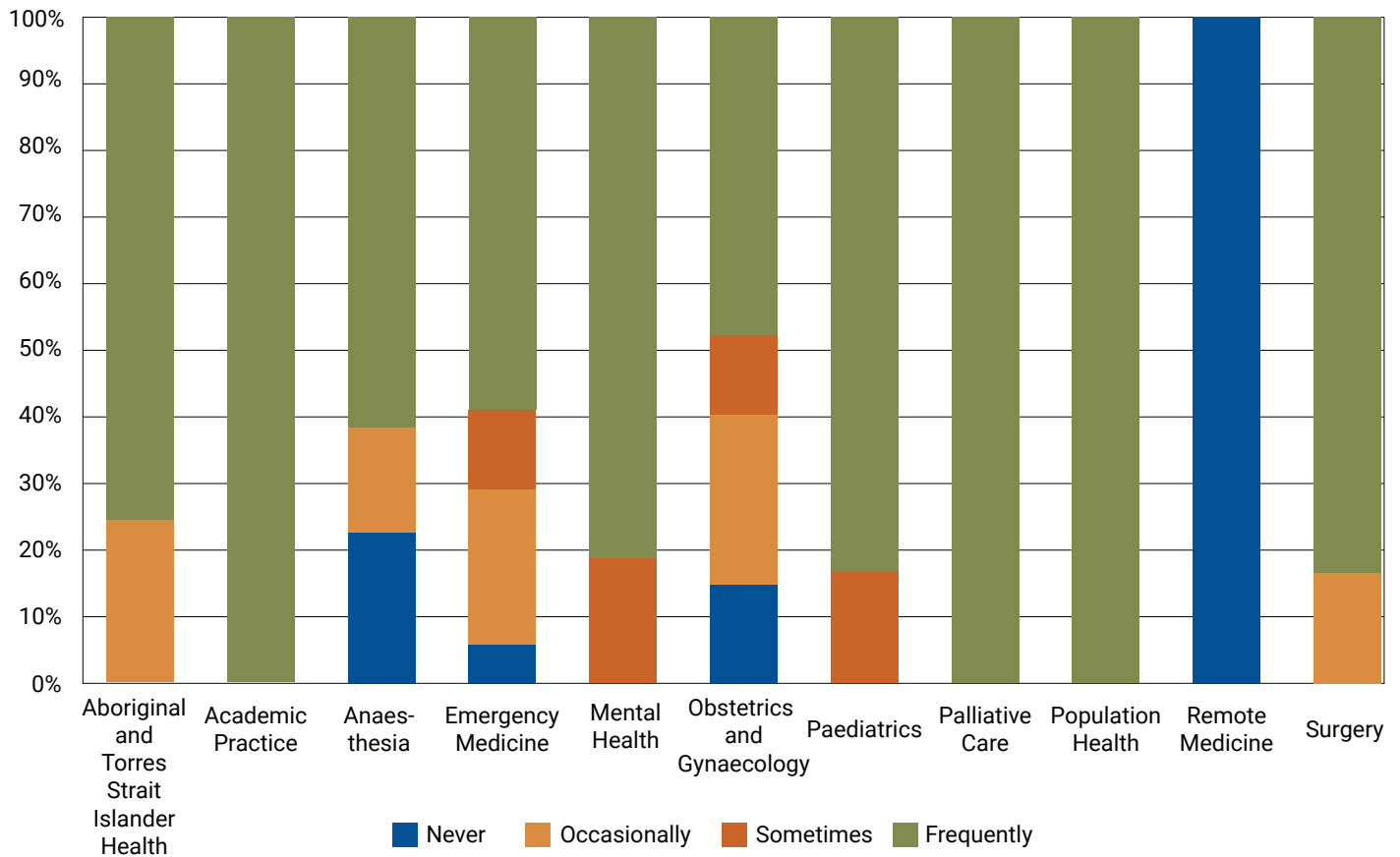
How long do you plan to work in rural/regional Victoria



Reasons for leaving rural

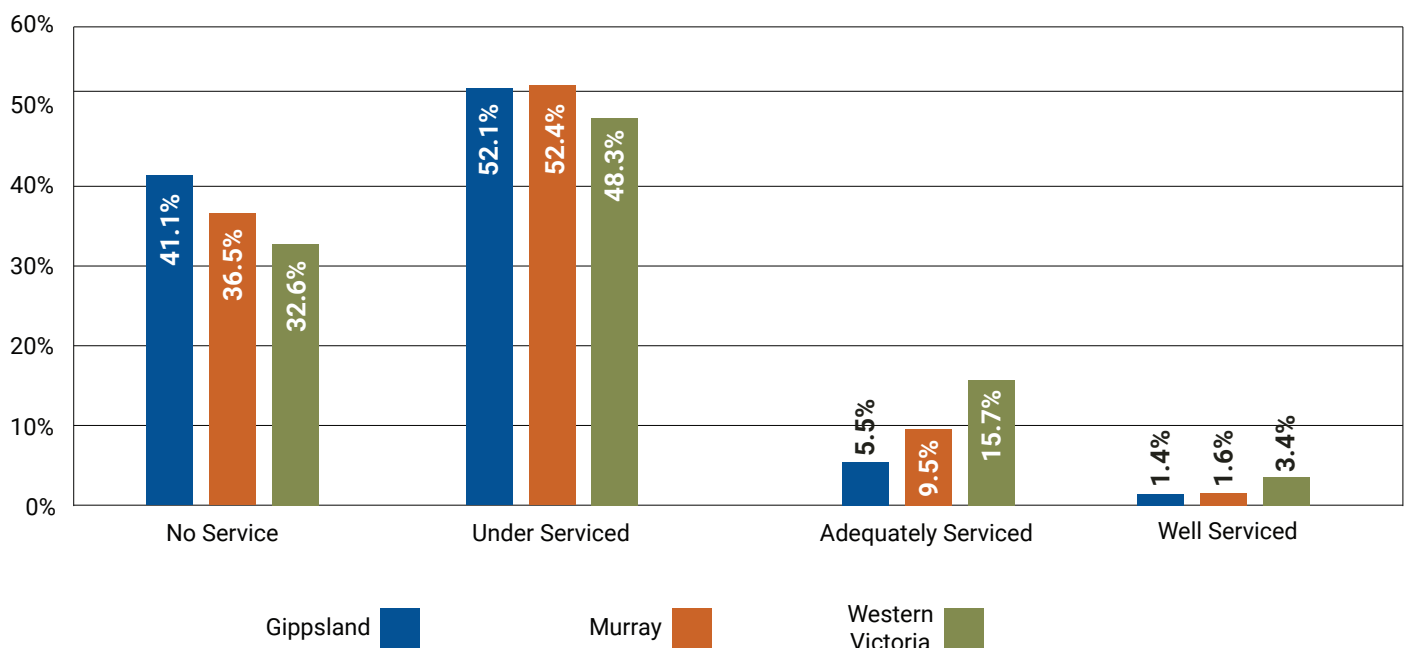
- Primary reasons for considering leaving rural areas are:
 - ◇ Burnout/workload
 - ◇ Career Growth
 - ◇ Support for Continued Professional Development
 - ◇ Remuneration

Advanced Skill Usage of Qualified General Practitioners

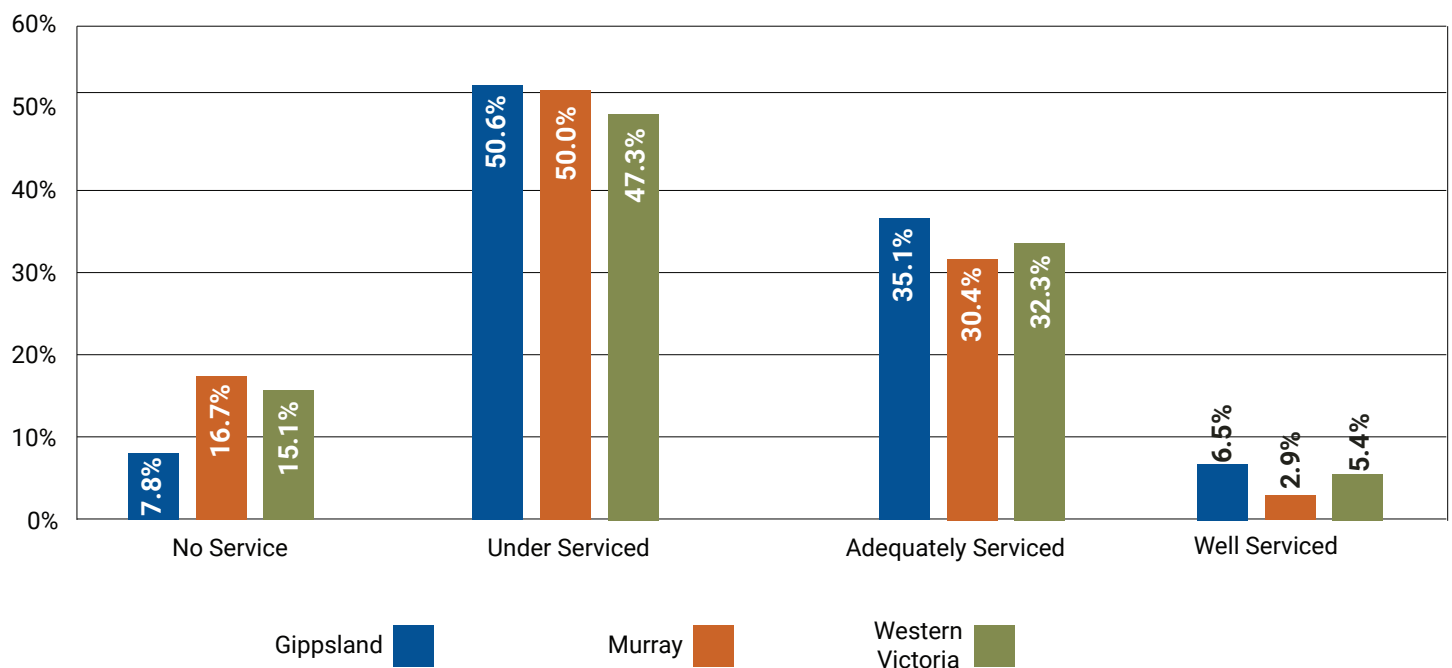


Service levels by PHN region

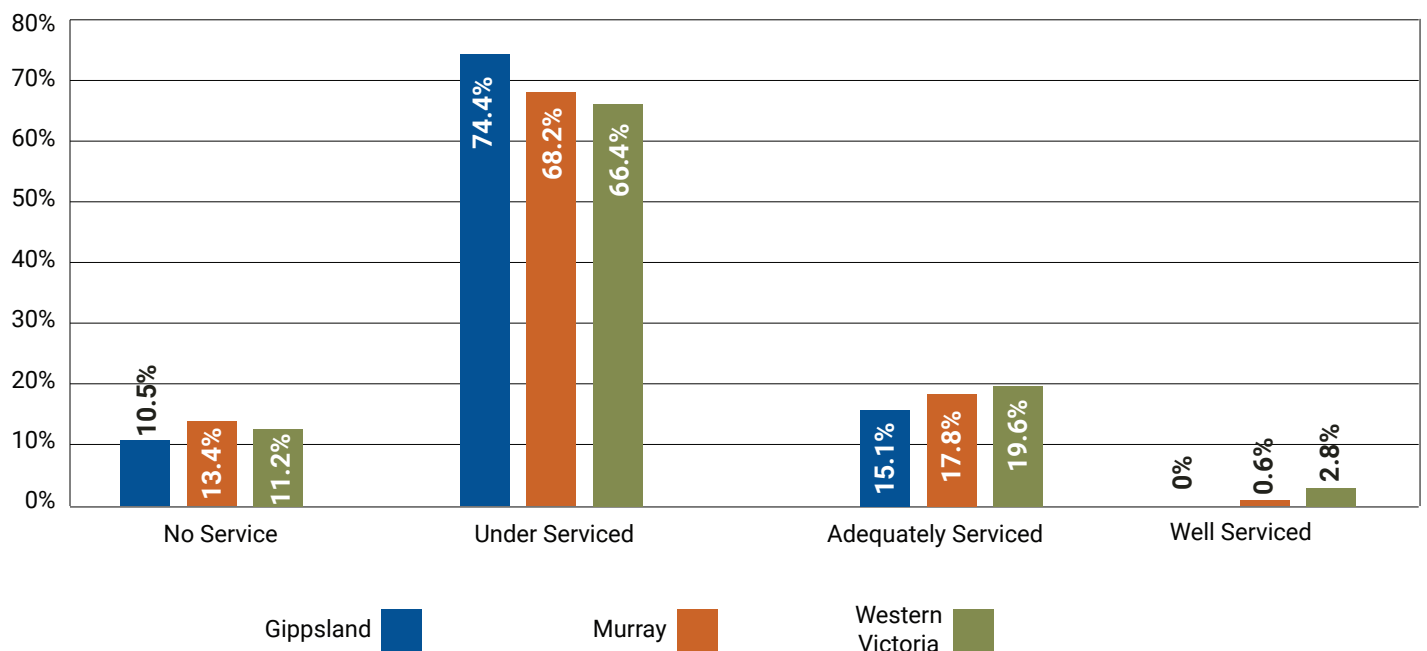
Dermatology Service Levels



Obstetrics and Gynaecology Service Levels

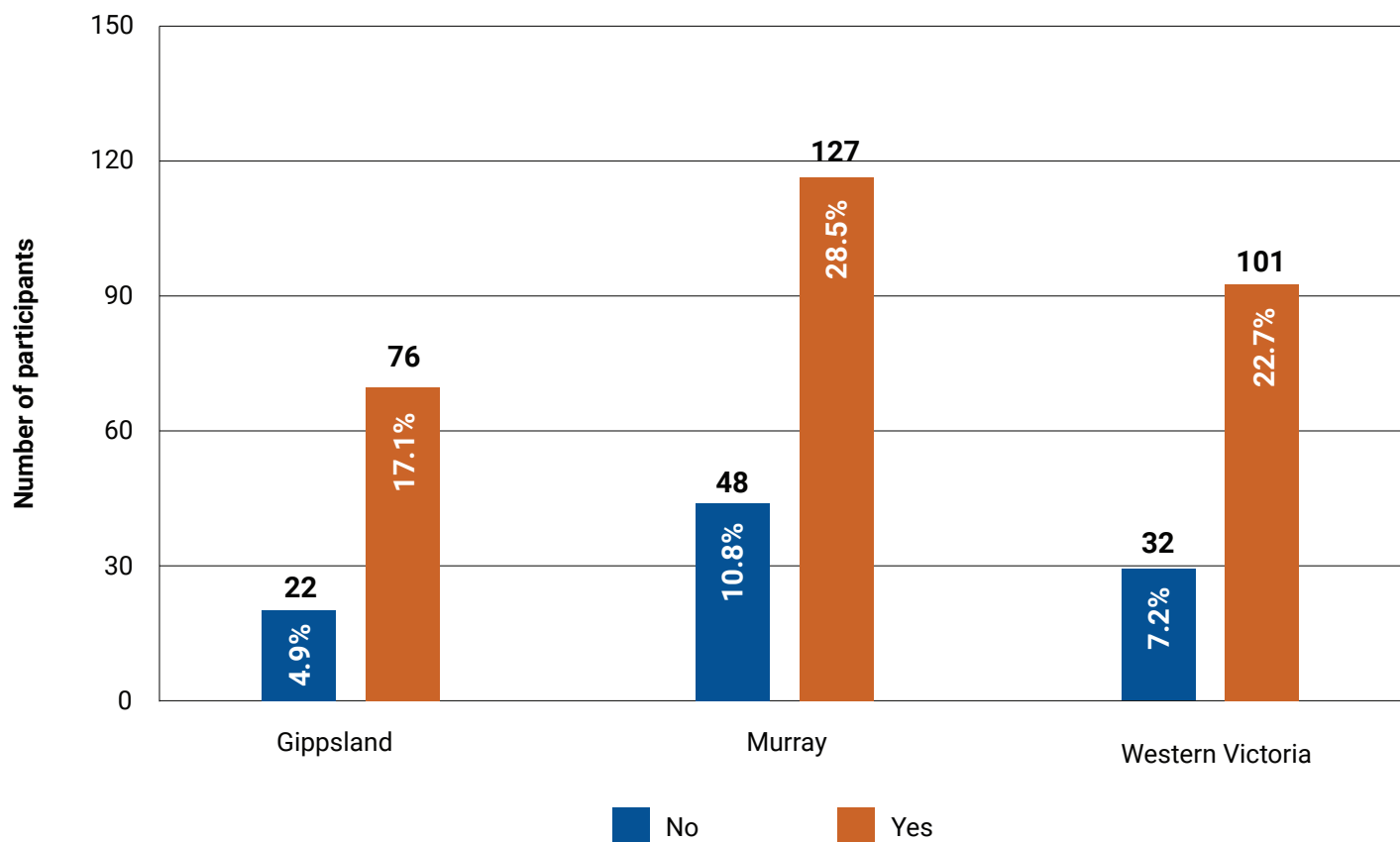


Paediatrics and Child Health Service Levels



Cultural Safety Training

Have you undertaken Cultural Safety Training in the past 3 years?



Disclaimer: the information is purely the results that have come from the 2023 census and may not be reflective of the readers experience.



Contact details

E-mail: info@rwav.com.au

Phone: +61 3 9349 7800

About RWAV

RWAV improves access to quality primary care health services and other health services for rural, regional and First Nations communities across Victoria. We improve health outcomes through effective and customised health workforce solutions that are informed through partnerships, workforce and population health data, and collaboration with communities.