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RWAV's Landmark Year: Advancing Health Access and Workforce Development

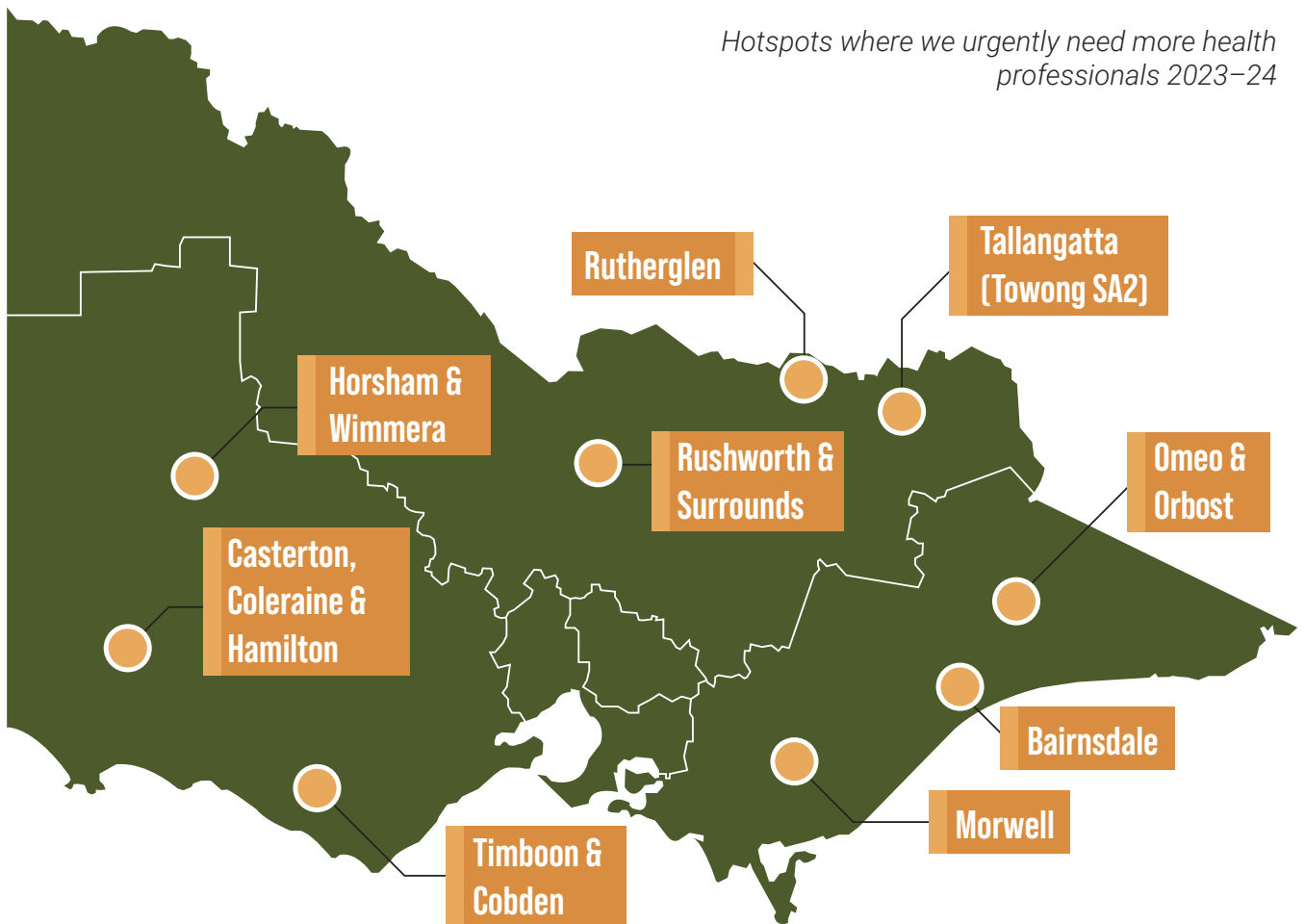
Melbourne, 6 December 2024: RWAV is proud to announce the release of its 2023-2024 Annual Report, showcasing a year of significant achievements in strengthening Victoria's rural and regional health workforce. The report highlights initiatives, strategic collaborations, and key data insights, underscoring RWAV's commitment to improving healthcare access for communities across the state.

This year's successes reflect the dedication of healthcare professionals in rural and regional Victoria. RWAV also acknowledges the vital contributions of our stakeholders, partners, and funders—the Australian and Victorian governments—whose support has made these achievements possible.

Key milestones from this year's Annual Report include:

- **Outreach programs:** Supported 291 services, with healthcare professionals completing 3,227 outreach visits, providing care to 47,787 patients, including 10,728 First Nations people.
- **Locum services:** Delivered 108 locum placements and 2,489 locum sessions, ensuring continuity of care across rural communities.
- **Recruitment and retention incentives:** Awarded over \$185,000 in incentives, supporting 109 primary care services in recruitment efforts.
- **Workforce pathways:** Supported 51 General Practitioners in achieving placements or Fellowship and awarded 138 grants to students pursuing health careers.
- **Grants awarded:** Approved 2,860 grants, including 956 Health Workforce Scholarship Program applications and 253 Medical Professional Development grants.
- **Allied health grants:** Awarded 60 upskilling grants, six grants for establishing new services, and nine for service expansions.
- **Rural Link & Learn project:** Engaged 251 rural allied health clinicians in 14 networking and upskilling events across Victoria.
- **Mental health workforce incentives:** Distributed over \$1.8 million in incentives, supporting 160 placements. Due to the program's success, funding has doubled to \$3.2 million through June 2025.
- **RWAV Conference 2024:** Welcomed over 220 health professionals, leaders, and policymakers for two days of collaboration.
- **Victorian Rural Health Awards:** Celebrated 110 nominations, presented 13 awards, and honoured five GPs for 35+ years of service. The virtual gala attracted 229 attendees.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Participated in 360 stakeholder engagements, fostering collaboration across the sector.
- **Victorian Rural Health Workforce Census:** Hotspots where we urgently need more health professionals 2023–24 were identified as below.

Hotspots where we urgently need more health professionals 2023–24



Quote from Lauren Cordwell, RWAV CEO

“RWAV has had a big year with many achievements and successes in supporting greater access to healthcare for rural, regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This year, we reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring rural Victorian communities have access to the healthcare they need and deserve.

Through our bold new Strategic Plan, we strengthened recruitment programs, enhanced professional development opportunities, and introduced innovative digital tools, making it easier for health professionals to access vital resources, grants, and training.

We worked closely with communities, health services, and leaders to deliver tailored solutions, helping health professionals stay and thrive in rural areas. Our partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations have been critical in supporting culturally safe healthcare where it’s most needed.

The report highlights the significant impact rural health professionals have on their community, with RWAV’s contributions to the Working Better for Medicare Review, Scope of Practice Review, and Rural Urgent and Emergency Care in Victoria submission, we are driving positive change. Thank you to our partners, the Australian and Victorian Governments, and the RWAV team for advancing healthcare for rural Victorians.”

About RWAV

RWAV remains committed to addressing the unique challenges faced by rural and regional communities while fostering sustainable healthcare solutions. Dedicated to supporting the health workforce and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Victoria, RWAV collaborates with health services, practices, and communities to develop innovative solutions that attract and retain a workforce tailored to meet the needs of rural Victoria.

Explore the full Annual Report to learn more about what RWAV has done over the last year. For more information or to view the Annual Report, visit <https://www.rwav.com.au/rwav-annual-report-2023-2024/>

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