

8th Biennial Conference
Mount Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health, James Cook University

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Rural and Remote Health Workforce – Transition to Practice

**20-22nd of July, 2016,
Mount Isa QLD**

Paper / Poster Abstract title:

Enabling successful transition to rural practice through curriculum design and practices

Abstract Text:

Background: The Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) at James Cook University was established in 2009 with the mission to address the population health needs and workforce shortages of rural, remote and tropical Australia. This presentation will focus on how aligning curriculum design and clinical experiences enables and encourages transition to graduate careers in rural, remote and regional areas.

Methods: Through an iterative process, data gathered from student feedback surveys since 2010 has informed curriculum development and innovative program design, which is reviewed annually. A capstone program is currently being evaluated.

Results: Student feedback and annual review has informed changes to how the rural and remote focus is embedded into curriculum across the pre-clinical and clinical years of the BDS. The establishment of a final capstone year is effectively enabling alignment of the Australian Dental Council's *Professional attributes and competencies of the newly graduated dentist* with the distinctive profile of a rural dental practitioner.

Conclusion / Recommendations: Ongoing student feedback will inform program design and delivery to optimise engagement with learning opportunities and clinical experiences. Further research is required to evaluate whether the current curriculum design can continue to reliably enable transition to the rural workforce given the emerging funding challenges.