

## 8th Biennial Conference

Mount Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health, James Cook University

# Are You Remotely Interested?



*Rural and Remote Health Workforce – Transition to Practice*

20-22<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2016,  
Mount Isa QLD

### Abstract

**Exploring the impact of James Cook University BDS graduate intentions and destinations on the rural and remote dental workforce**

### 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 through aligning student selection, curriculum and clinical experiences to enable and encourage graduate careers in rural, remote and regional areas. This paper reports early evidence on the career outcomes of graduates in the first three cohorts.

*Methods:* Data were gathered from two sources to allow mapping of career intentions and graduate destinations. An exit survey of provided student data followed by tracking graduate careers of 2013 to 2015 cohorts.

*Results:* A significant proportion of JCU dental students intended to practise outside capital cities. Many graduates planned to work initially in rural towns or outer regional centres with progression to practice in larger centres.

*Conclusion / Recommendations:* While ongoing follow up will track career progression over a longer time, the data so far suggest that the career outcomes of JCU dental graduates are aligned with the workforce needs of the region. Further research is required to compare data with intentions and destinations of from those graduating from Australia's predominantly metropolitan dental schools. This next stage will reveal whether program design is an reliable predictor of graduate careers and will inform ongoing initiatives to build the regional, rural and remote dental workforce.

**Key words:** Australia, Queensland, dental graduates, workforce intentions, career progression.