



**Exploring the impact of JCU BDS  
graduate intentions and destinations  
in the rural and remote dental  
workforce: 2013-2015**

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**AYRI Conference, Mount Isa 2016**

# Aims and Background

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## **Aim:**

To report early evidence on the career outcomes of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) graduates in the first 3 'pioneering' cohorts

## **Background:**

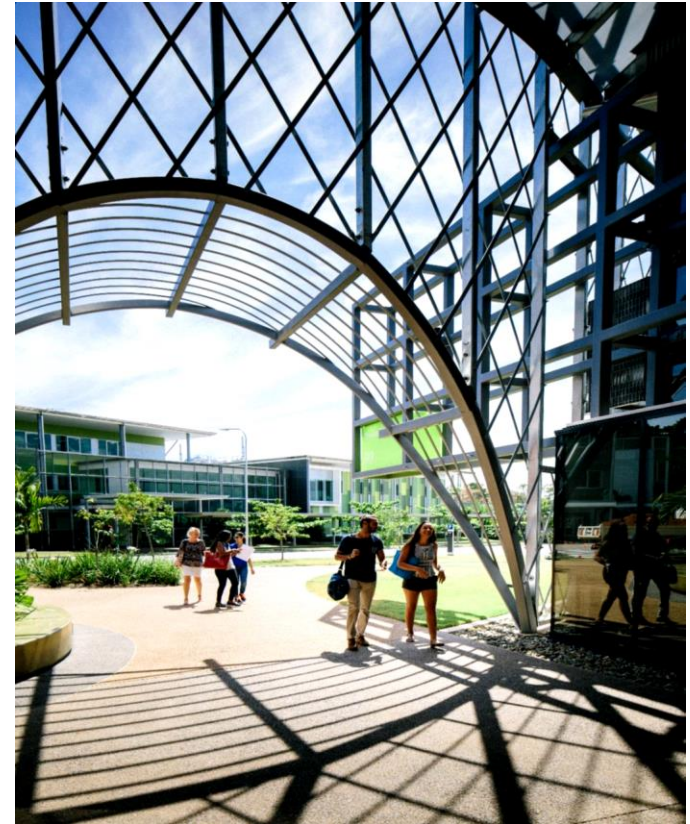
- Established 2008 - one of only three dental schools in Australia located outside a capital city; only Dental School in Northern Australia
  - Broad-based program that includes all aspects of dental practice
  - Focuses on issues of concern to populations in Northern Australia
    - particularly relating to tropical, rural and Indigenous practice
    - workforce maldistribution and shortages
  - Aligns student selection, curriculum and clinical experiences to enable and encourage graduate careers in rural, remote and regional areas.
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# Methods

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Data gathered from two sources.

1. BDS Exit Survey - allows mapping of career intentions and graduate destinations
2. Tracking graduate careers of first three 'pioneering' cohorts



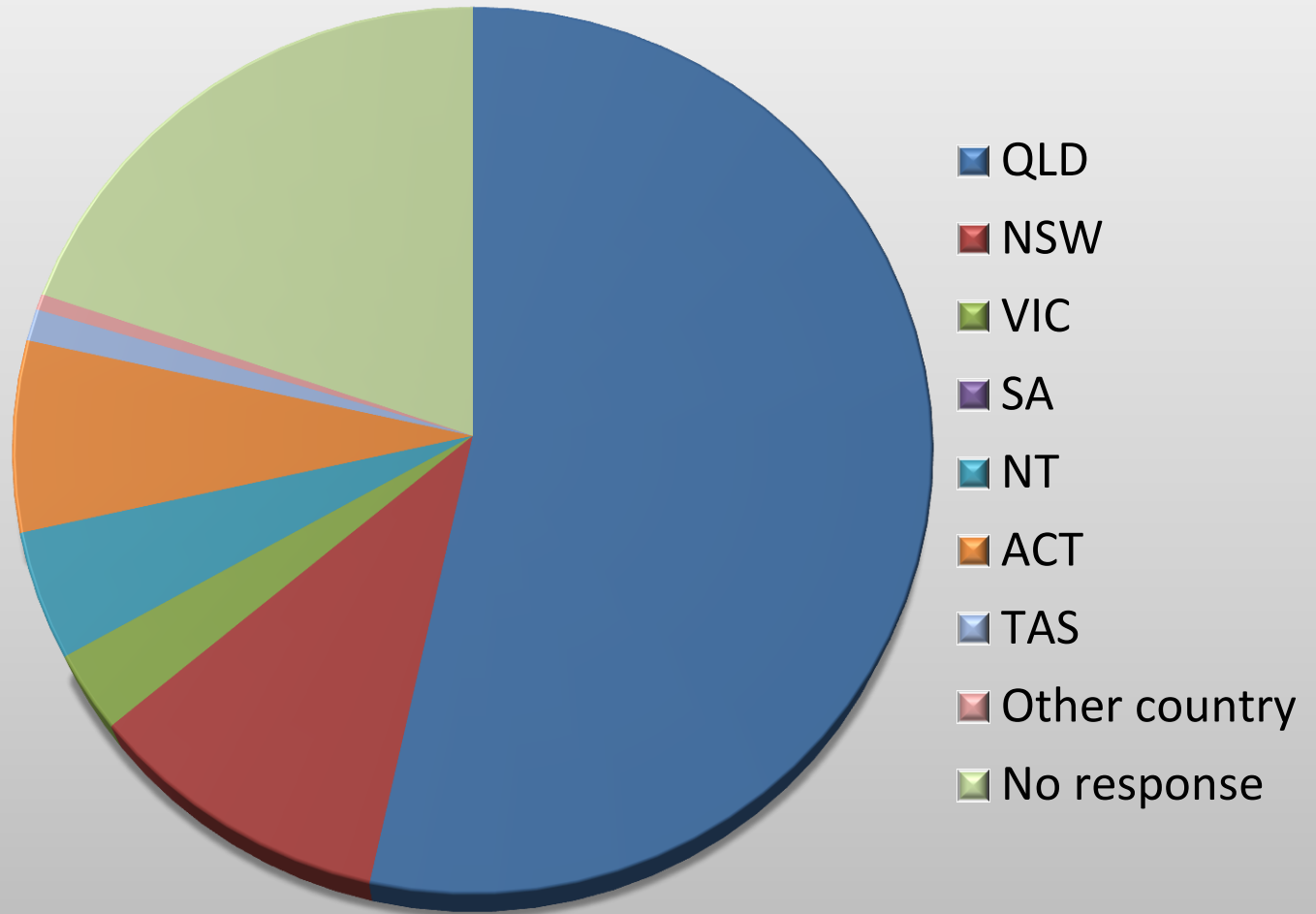
# 1. BDS Exit Survey Findings

*Do you intend to work in a rural area now that you have finished your course?*

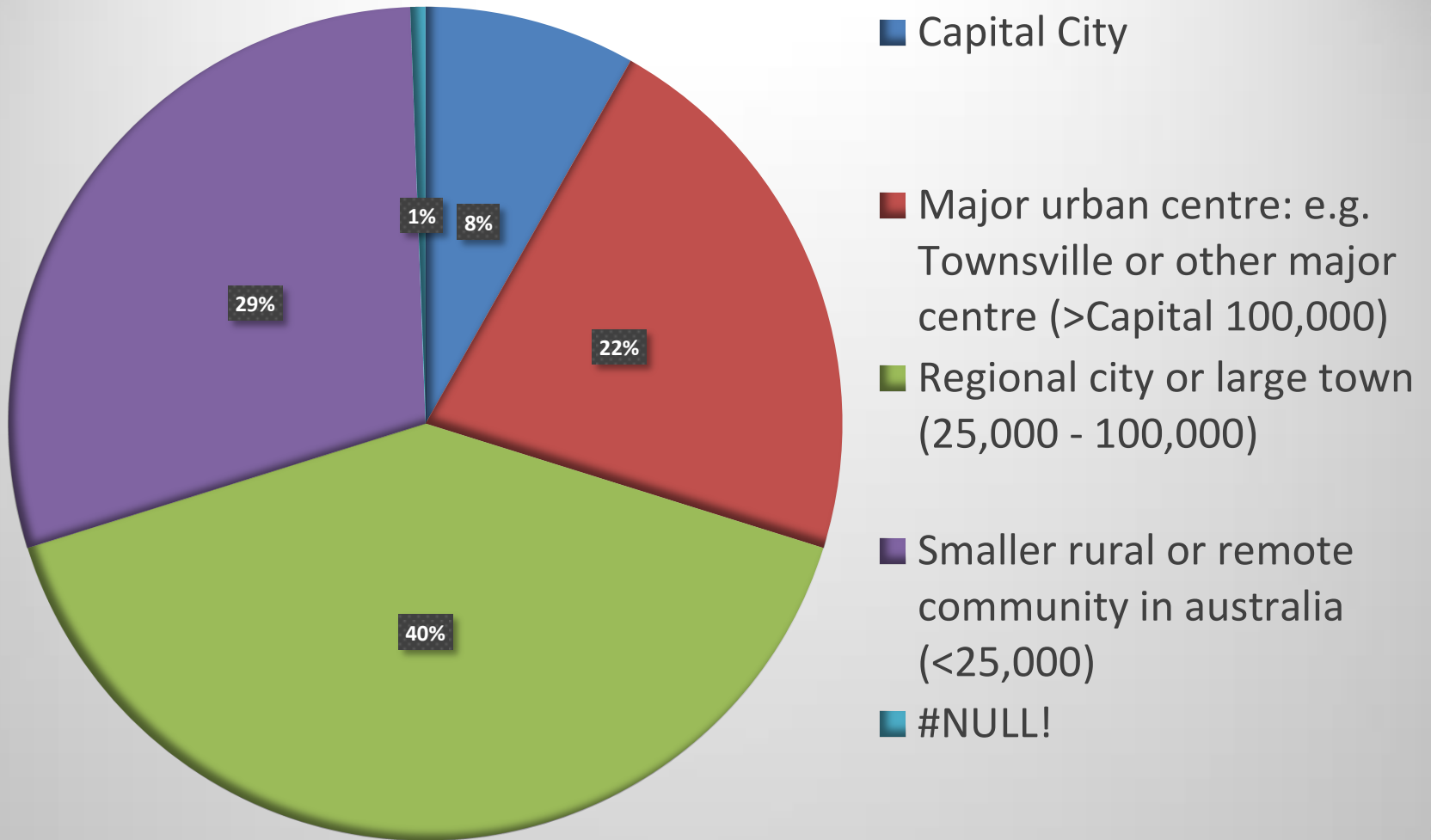
*If you changed your mind please explain.*

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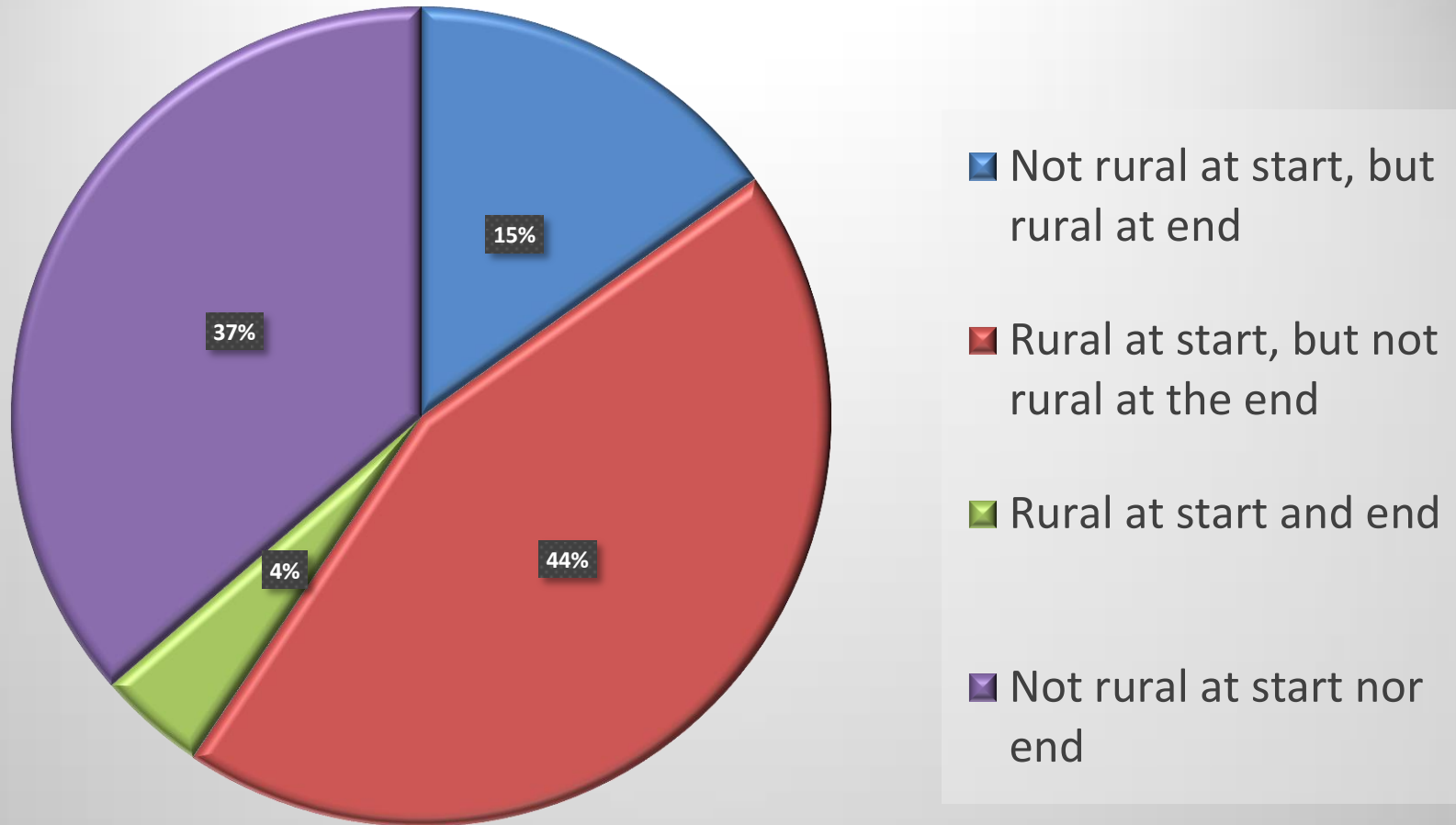
# State where intended to work



# Geographical location most like to practice



# Intention to work in Rural areas at start and end of BDS degree



# Reasons to stay rural

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- Rural background
  - Social networks
    - “Coming from a rural area it's a comfortable setting and given lack of services in these areas wanting to help in these areas”
    - “I come from a rural area and like the rural aspect and lifestyle”
    - “From a rural town originally and decided to go back”
    - “To be with family”
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# Reason for change: Enablers

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- ✓ “Rural and remote placements were amazing”
- ✓ “Because I believe I will get better exposure and experience”
- ✓ “I want to work in a rural area as I really enjoy it”
- ✓ “It wasn't like I thought it would be. I enjoyed my rural placement.”
- ✓ “Clinical placement experiences made me reconsider as it was very enjoyable”
- ✓ “Great experience in rural/regional placement sites”
- ✓ “Appreciated the rural lifestyle. Realising it's not so bad.”

# Reason for change: Enablers

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- ✓ “Final Year Placement Experience”
  - ✓ “Wanted to work in Townsville but loved the lifestyle of Alice Springs and the work available”
  - ✓ “More rural exposure made me open to the idea”
  - ✓ “Placement on CR2 in Mount Isa”
  - ✓ “Better/relaxed lifestyle”
  - ✓ “Rural dentistry allows more autonomy”
  - ✓ “Rural and remote placements were amazing”
  - ✓ “My placement in Darwin and more specifically the opportunity to work in a remote community”
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# Reason for change: Barriers

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- Family commitments
    - Part time
  - Distance from social networks / faith
  - Cost of housing
  - Wants to specialise
  - Postgraduate study
  - Go where the jobs are available
  - Didn't have positive placement experience
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# Exit Survey Results Summary

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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.

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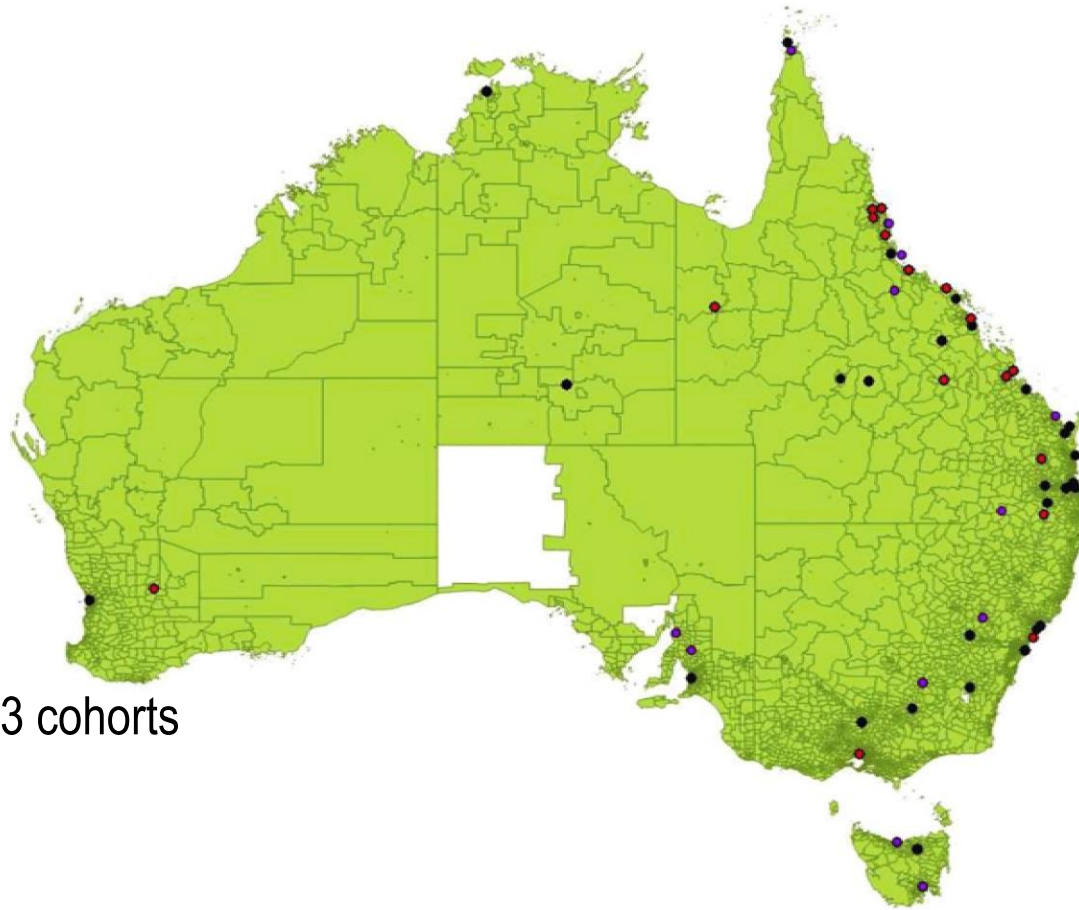
# Indigenous graduates

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- 6 from B. Dental Surgery
  - Significant impact on Indigenous dental workforce and patient experience
  - Earlier exit:
    - B. Life Sciences
    - Diploma Health Sciences
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# Tracking destinations:



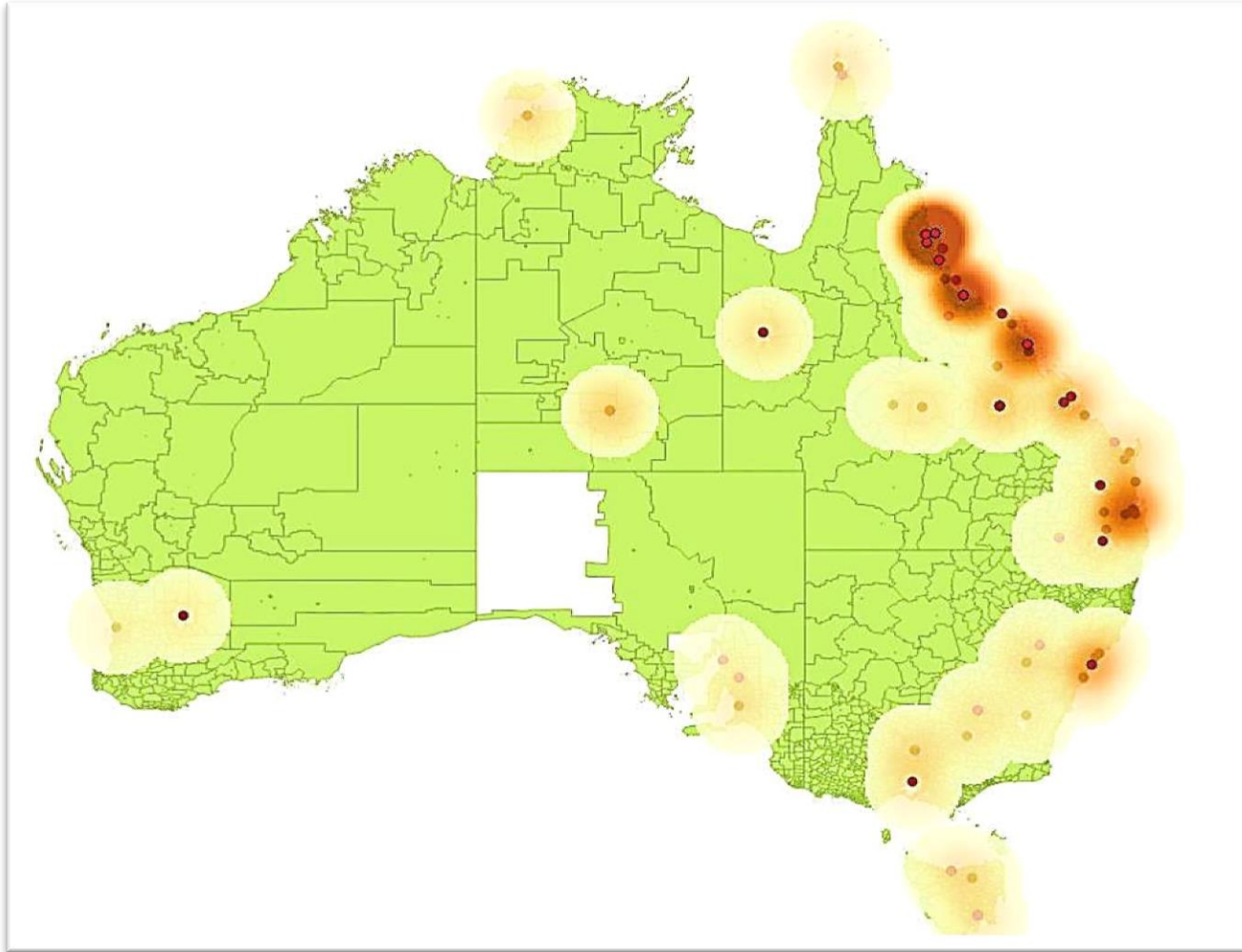
GIS map for all 3 cohorts

Red = Y3

Black = Y2

Purple = Y1

# Tracking destinations: Heatmap



# Conclusion / Recommendations

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- Initial data suggests that the career outcomes of JCU dental graduates are aligned with the workforce needs of the region.
  - Ongoing follow up will track career progression over a longer time
  - Further research is required to compare data with intentions and destinations of from those graduating from predominantly metropolitan dental schools.
  - Further will explore whether program design is an reliable predictor of graduate careers and will inform ongoing initiatives to build the regional, rural and remote dental workforce.
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AN EDUCATION  
AND CAREER WITH  
**adventure,  
skills and  
impact**

# Enabling successful transition to rural dental practice through curriculum design and

