



Media Statement

23 February 2026

International Women's Day Spotlight: Dr Jana Pittman to Headline WA Rural Health Conference

"Give to Gain": Leadership, resilience and women's health in focus at WA Rural Health Conference.

The **WA Rural Health Conference** (14 & 15 March) will welcome internationally renowned athlete-turned-doctor **Jana Pittman** as a keynote speaker, bringing a powerful and deeply personal perspective on resilience, high performance and women's health.

Held just after International Women's Day, the conference provides an opportunity to reflect on the 2026 theme, "Give to Gain", recognising that progress in women's health, leadership and rural healthcare comes through advocacy, service and shared expertise.

A two-time world champion and four-time Commonwealth Games gold medallist in athletics, Dr Pittman is also a dual Olympian who represented Australia at both Summer and Winter Olympic Games before transitioning into medicine. She is now a 3rd year Registrar in Obstetrics and Gynaecology with a Masters of Reproductive Medicine.

At this year's conference, Dr Pittman will present on the intersection of elite performance and clinical practice, exploring how resilience, adaptability and courage underpin both sporting excellence and quality patient care. Drawing on her lived experience of career-ending injuries, reinvention, medical training and motherhood, she will speak candidly about navigating pressure, overcoming setbacks and leading through uncertainty.

Dr Pittman said she is looking forward to engaging with health professionals who serve some of Western Australia's most diverse and geographically dispersed populations.

"Rural health professionals understand resilience in a way that few others do. They work with limited resources, vast distances and complex patient needs, yet they show up every day with commitment and compassion," Dr Pittman said.

"My journey from elite sport to medicine has taught me that performance isn't about perfection, it's about persistence.

"Whether you're competing on the world stage or caring for patients in a small regional town, the principles are the same: preparation, adaptability and courage.

“Women’s health in particular requires advocacy, innovation and strong clinical leadership. I’m passionate about ensuring women, no matter where they live, have access to safe, informed and evidence-based care.”

Professor Catherine Elliott, CEO of Rural Health West said Dr Pittman’s unique combination of elite sporting achievement, medical excellence and advocacy makes her an exceptional addition to the program.

“Dr Pittman brings a rare perspective, she understands high-performance environments, personal adversity and frontline clinical care,” Professor Catherine Elliott said.

“Her insights into resilience, leadership and women’s health will resonate strongly with our rural workforce.”

In the spirit of “Give to Gain”, the WA Rural Health Conference brings together medical, nursing and allied health professionals from across the state and provides a platform for knowledge-sharing, mentorship and collaboration, recognising that strengthening rural healthcare relies on collective contribution and leadership.

It also offers the opportunity to strengthen networks and explore solutions to improve healthcare access and outcomes in rural and remote Western Australia.

For conference details and registration information, visit www.waruralhealthconference.com.au

**Interview opportunities available*

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Rural Health West aims to improve access to quality healthcare for rural communities through the provision of a highly skilled, motivated and sustainable medical and allied health workforce. We are a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.