



Media Statement

MEDIA RELEASE

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Future doctors to experience life and medicine in the Pilbara

Health workforce shortages across rural, regional and remote Western Australia continue to impact communities, including across the Pilbara. In response, Rural Health West is creating more opportunities for doctors in training to experience the rewards of working and living in the regions.

The upcoming Junior Doctors Pilbara Immersion Program (JDPIP) will bring six early-career doctors to the Pilbara from 3–10 May 2026, offering a hands-on introduction to rural and remote medicine, community life and culture.

The program is open to Junior Doctors Years 1 – 5, and is supported by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM). Participants are all considering a career in rural generalist medicine through ACRRM fellowship training.

Over seven days, participants will travel through Port Hedland and Karratha, connecting with local health services, professionals and communities. The program highlights both the professional opportunities and the unique lifestyle that come with working in the Pilbara.

Importantly, the immersion also includes cultural learning and engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), recognising the vital role Aboriginal health services and communities play in delivering care across the region.

Key activities include:

- Visits to health campuses in Port Hedland and Karratha
- Cultural engagement activities and visits to ACCHOs
- General practice visits
- Pilbara Health Professionals Network events

Rural Health West Manager Workforce Solutions, Beth McEwan, said the program is designed to give participants a genuine understanding of both the challenges and rewards of rural practice.

“The Pilbara is a unique and rewarding place to live and work, but we know attracting and retaining doctors can be challenging,” Beth said.

“This program gives doctors in training the chance to connect with communities, learn from local health professionals and experience firsthand what a career in the region can offer.”

This year’s program will also align with Rural Health West’s Rural and Remote Retrieval (RRR) Weekend in Karijini National Park - an immersive training experience set in a remote environment.

Participants will join doctors, nurses, paramedics and other health professionals currently working in rural and remote settings, taking part in emergency response scenarios in rugged, real-world conditions.

“They will be working in environments where resources are limited, which reflects the realities of remote healthcare,” Beth said.

“It’s a powerful learning experience that builds clinical skills, teamwork and confidence.”

The RRR Weekend focuses on:

- Teamwork and leadership in high-pressure situations
- Decision-making in uncertain environments
- Collaborative learning and peer support
- Managing stress in remote settings

Exposure to rural practice is known to influence where doctors choose to work. Through initiatives like JDPIP, Rural Health West aims to encourage more doctors to pursue ACRRM fellowship training and build long-term careers in the Pilbara.

By connecting future doctors with local communities, services and culture, the program supports a stronger, more sustainable health workforce for regional Western Australia.

Ends

***Photo 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.