



ANZCA
FPM

September 2026

President and CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Below is an electronic copy of a physical letter which has been sent to identified stakeholders

ANZCA Regional and Rural Workforce Strategy 2026-2028

On behalf of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), we are pleased to share the college's newly released Regional and Rural Workforce Strategy 2026-2028.

This strategy builds on our inaugural 2021 version and reinforces our commitment to a sustainable, well-distributed specialist workforce and equitable access to care. The strategy sets out the college's priorities for improving access to anaesthesia, pain medicine and perioperative medicine in regional and rural communities across Australia and New Zealand over the next three years, guided by four key pillars: **Plan, Select, Train, and Support and Retain**.

As a valued partner in this work, we are pleased to enclose a copy of the strategy with this letter.



Since our inaugural strategy was published in 2021, the college has made tangible progress on many regional and rural initiatives:

- Establishing the **Rural Generalist Anaesthesia (RGA) Training Program**, with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) that enables patients in rural areas better access to surgery. To date, the grandparenting process has successfully recognised 414 RGAs, and between 2023 to 2025 there were 126 individuals who have successfully completed the program. There are currently 76 trainees undertaking the program.
- Embedding **rural based anaesthesia training pathways and rotations**. These pathways enable trainees to undertake 70-80 per cent of their training in regional/rural settings, with a metropolitan advanced training rotation to fulfil complex training requirements. Doctors who train in rural areas are more likely to establish careers there. One jurisdiction's regional pathway, established in 2020, has now seen a total intake of 38 trainees and another jurisdiction's pathway averages 30 trainees per year.
- Broadening **pain medicine training opportunities in regional areas** via flexible accreditation pathways pilot across regional settings, which saw an additional two pain medicine regional settings being accredited in Ballarat, Victoria and Mackay, Queensland and growing interest from other locations. There are now six accredited regional/rural settings.
- Developing **targeted advocacy, promotional representation of positive regional and rural training lifestyles and professional development resources** to support regional and rural practice. Some these have included the Planning for success exam preparation resource, Critical Incident Debriefing Toolkit, Masterclass in effective communication, and Beyond City Limits articles.

Looking ahead, the college will continue to expand our successful foundational work on:

- Our **Dual Training Recognition Process**, a collaboration with the College of Intensive Care Medicine (CICM), was launched this year. This process potentially reduces the time it takes to complete both anaesthesia and intensive care training programs by up to 2.5 years. This initiative delivers significant workforce benefits, particularly in regional and rural settings and during after-hours care, where clinicians with expertise across both scopes of practice can help address workforce shortages and enhance service flexibility.
- Developing a specific rural and regional delivery model for the **ANZCA Course in Perioperative Medicine**, which was launched in 2023, the first in the world to offer clinical immersion. Perioperative medicine in regional and rural areas is a critical component of equitable health system design, particularly where geography, workforce distribution, and service configuration significantly shape access to care.

We see the strategy as a foundation for continued collaboration and would welcome your support as we work towards a more sustainable, equitably distributed specialist workforce for regional and rural communities.

For further information on our strategy or to discuss how we can continue to partner on these priorities please contact Nilusha Moses, Government Relations Policy Manager at nmoses@anzca.edu.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Tanya Selak
President



Dr Lance Emerson
CEO