

Workforce analysis: rural general practitioners in Western Australia



General practice workforce in Aboriginal Medical Services 2014

Reporting general practice trends

Rural Health West conducts an annual survey of general practitioners (GPs) working in an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Area (RA) 2 to 5 location in Western Australia at the annual census date of 30 November.

Overall, 67.1% of the rural and remote general practice workforce responded to the 2014 survey. This high response rate, together with ongoing data collection strategies, means that Rural Health West offers contemporary valid data about trends in the rural general practice workforce to support workforce policy and planning.

This is the fifth year that Rural Health West has published fact sheets about the general practice workforce in rural and remote Western Australia. This current fact sheet builds on the earlier annual snapshots and reports on the 2014 local and national data¹, where available, for the same period.

The 2014 survey results are set out in the Minimum Data Set Report and Workforce Analysis Update 2014 which is available on the website at www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/workforcedata.

Aboriginal Medical Services in rural and remote Western Australia

Workforce data is collected for Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) practices that employ doctors in rural and remote Western Australia. The majority of these services (10 or 71%) are located in RA 4 (remote) and RA 5 (very remote) locations.

The Kimberley AMSs Council supports services to Beagle Bay and Bidadanga and the Derby Aboriginal Health Service supports services to Jurrugk. Both AMSs located in RA 3 (Kalgoorlie and Geraldton) support communities located in RA 4 and RA 5 locations.

Remoteness Category	AMS	AMS name
ASGC-RA 2	2	South West AMS Wheatbelt AHS
ASGC-RA 3	2	Bega Garribirringu HSI Geraldton Regional AMS
ASGC-RA 4	5	Broome Regional AMS Carnarvon AMS Kimberley AMS Council Wirraka Maya AHS Ord Valley AMS
ASGC-RA 5	5	Derby AHS Mawarnkarra HSAC Ngaanyatjarra HS Puntukurnu AMS Yura Yungi AMS

GPs in AMSs

52 permanent GPs (46 resident and 6 FIFO) recorded rural and remote AMS practices as their primary practice in 2014.

This represented an increase of 5 doctors compared to 2013 and the highest number recorded to date.

These data excluded WAGPET GP registrars who were working at an AMS practice at the census date, as they were temporary workforce.

A further 269 GPs self-reported providing Aboriginal health services within their practices, meaning that 44.3% (321) of the overall permanent general practice workforce in rural and remote Western Australia provided some Aboriginal health services in 2014.

This was comparable to the 44.2% identified for Western Australia in 2013 and significantly higher than the national average of 18.5% in 2014.

Key differences

The four previous fact sheets identified that the profile for GPs working in AMS practices differed significantly from the overall GP profile in rural and remote Western Australia because:

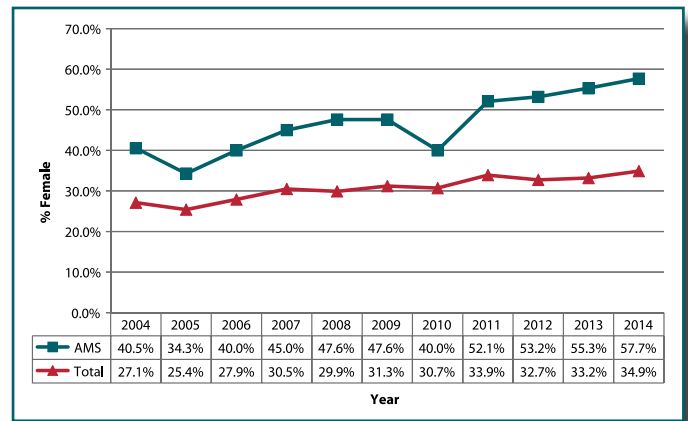
- GP numbers were relatively static;
- the turnover rate was higher; and
- there was a greater proportion of female GPs.

The 2014 data indicated a similar picture.

GP numbers static

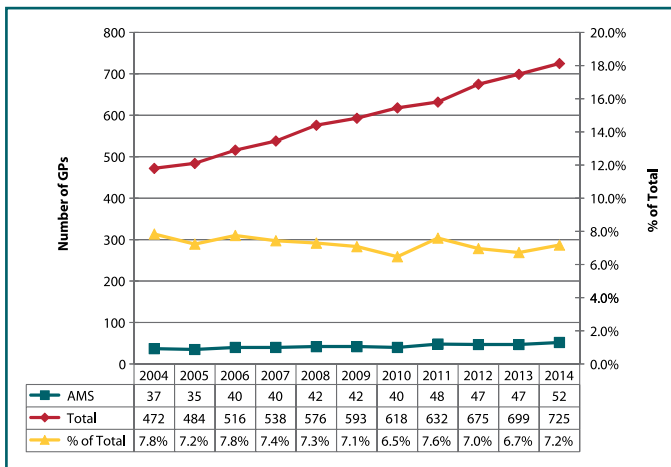
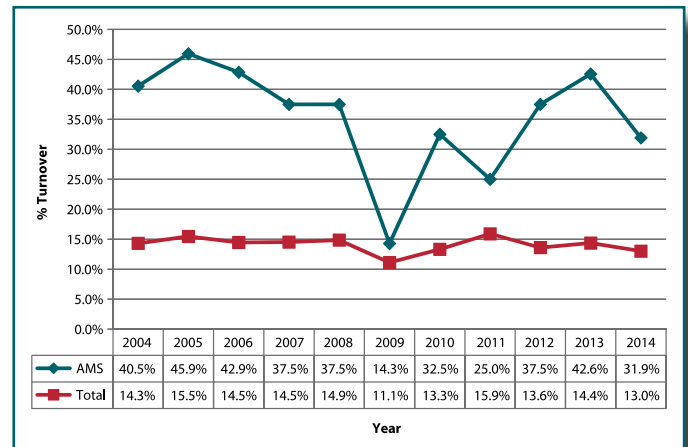
The general practice workforce in rural and remote Western Australia increased by 49 doctors overall in 2014, an increase of 6.2% compared to November 2013. However, the percentage of GPs working in AMS practices as their primary practice remained static at between 7% to 8% of the workforce, despite an increase of 5 GPs in 2014. In addition to the primary workforce of 52 GPs, 7 additional GPs reported providing sessions at AMS practices as their secondary practice in 2014. This was a decrease on the average, since 2005, of 9 GPs per year who reported providing some sessions in AMS practices.

During the period 1 December 2013 to 30 November 2014, Rural Health West provided 1332 locum days to AMS practices, representing 45.1% of all locum days provided.



High turnover rate

There was a 10.7% decrease in the turnover rate in AMS practices between November 2013 and November 2014. However the turnover rate remained significantly higher than for the overall general practice workforce at 13.0% in 2014.



Female GPs

AMS practices continued the trend of a consistently higher proportion of female GPs than in the overall rural and remote GP workforce. The proportion of female GPs working in AMS practices (excluding WAGPET GP registrars) increased by 2.4% in 2014 to 57.7%.

Female GPs in AMS practices continued to be over-represented compared to the overall female GP workforce by a variance of 22.8% in 2014, an increase compared to 22.1% in 2013.

Other fact sheets

- Profile of the general practice workforce 2014
- Growing the future general practice workforce 2014
- Profile of the female general practice workforce 2014
- Profile of the GP proceduralist workforce 2014

¹ National data sourced from the *Medical Practice in Rural and Remote Australia: National Minimum Data Set (MDS) Report as at November 2014*.

