



RANZCOG acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters and communities across Australia, on which our members live and work, and to their Elders, past, present and future. RANZCOG recognises the special status of committed to meeting its obligations as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners.

Background:
The Australian rural, regional and remote context

Many women and families across rural, regional and remote Australia continue to face health service access barriers that create a financial, logistical and emotional burden on women and their families (Dietsch, Davies, Shackleton, Alston and McLeod, 2008). Addressing these barriers is critical especially as the regional population grew by 10.3% from 2012 to 2022 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024). The College believes that the families making the choice to live in these communities need access to consistent and timely health services.

From a rural, regional and remote workforce perspective, the maldistribution and lack of upskilling opportunities remain major barriers to maintaining safe and equitable women's health services. Self-reported data from rural and remote College Members (2019 to 2022) highlighted:

- ongoing challenges accessing training and upskilling opportunities, resulting in a lack of training and reduced confidence levels

The Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Health Strategy (Strategy) Aims

The aim of the RANZCOG Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Health Strategy (Strategy) is to provide a framework that will inform specific and measurable strategic priority areas that RANZCOG will implement to help address the health inequalities that rural, regional and remote women face when accessing women's health services.

The actions identified as part of the strategic priority areas outlined in *the next section* will either be strategic priority areas where RANZCOG has direct impact (e.g. training program reviews) or be strategic priority areas where RANZCOG can advocate to influence outcomes. These areas require advocacy and stakeholder engagement to drive forward (e.g., advocating for relocation support to rural communities). Each strategic priority area will be categorised as follows:

A short-term strategic priority area - an area that can be feasibly implemented operationally within a 12-month period

A medium-term strategic priority area - an area that can be feasibly implemented within a 2-year period as part of agreed timeframes (e.g., implementation within an agreed funding period)

A long-term strategic priority area - an area that can be feasibly implemented within at least a 3-year period as part of the RANZCOG 2025-2027 Strategic Plan

The Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Health Strategy Vision and Priorities

The vision of the Strategy is to ensure excellence and equity for women's health in regional, rural and remote Australia. This vision is underpinned by the RANZCOG 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, and provides four (4) strategic priorities, and measurable and specific actions that RANZCOG will implement to help address the health service and workforce challenges that women face as outlined below.

**Strategic Priority objectives:
P13**

Strategic Priority 4: The College will create mutually beneficial relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders to help promote equitable rural, regional and remote women's health services.

