THE RURAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM of the Faculty of Dentistry. University of Sydney.
HOW THE PROGRAM HAS EVOLVED

• **2006.** 2 final year students on 2 week rural elective

• **2007.** Rotations of students on 2 week Extramural Community Practice Education Program (during the mid semester break)

• **2009.** Prof. Anthony Blinkhorn’s research project sees 32 final year student volunteers on month long rotations in three rural clinics *Bowral, Orange* and *Bathurst*

• **2010.** 66 volunteers; *Bowral, Orange, Bathurst, Albury, Cessnock, Dubbo*. Total number of students in final year was 96; 69% volunteered.

• **2011.** 58 volunteers; Albury, Orange, Bathurst, *Cessnock, Dubbo, Ballina*. Total number of students in final year is 79; 73% volunteered
NSW is almost 4 times the area of the UK!!
AN EVALUATION OF A CLINICAL RURAL PLACEMENT SCHEME FOR UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY DENTAL STUDENTS

Mr George Johnson and Professor Anthony S Blinkhorn
Discipline of Population Oral Health, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Sydney
• There is a shortage of dentists working in Australian rural locations.
• This problem will increase in severity as dentists who qualified between 1965-1975 retire, as many of them work in rural areas.
• It is essential to encourage new dental graduates to consider working in country areas to alleviate this problem.
• Research literature in other health disciplines shows that a rural placement can increase rural recruitment.
• The Faculty of Dentistry, University of Sydney decided to implement a rural placement program drawing on the positive experiences of the Universities of Western Australia, Melbourne, Manchester and Leeds; as part of a strategy to promote rural training funded by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing.
• This paper discusses the effectiveness of rural placements in dental undergraduate teaching in terms of the suitability of the clinical training provided, its effect on the students’ clinical skills and confidence and whether the program influences students to consider rural work post graduation.
CONCLUSIONS

• The rural placement program provided an excellent clinical experience for the students as students and staff reported that their clinical confidence and skills had improved.

• The students showed an increased likelihood to consider working in a rural location after graduation.

• All the students enjoyed and valued the placement and would recommend it to future students.

AUTHORS
Mr George Johnson BSc MPH Research Fellow
Prof Anthony Blinkhorn BDS MSc PhD FDS NSW Chair of Population Oral Health

The paper which formed the basis of this report has been submitted to the European Journal of Dental Education
My home town... Bowral