National Evaluation
# RHMT Regional Training Hubs

Recap: RTH objectives

- Improve the coordination to enable students to complete as much of their medical training as possible in rural areas;

- Identify students & facilitate access to networked rural training opportunities at an early stage;

- Develop regional training capacity;

- Strengthen existing, and develop new, connections to improve continuity of training within the region; and

- Identify regional medical workforce needs & thus prioritise activity.

- ***Outcome: to increase the size of a well-prepared rural & remote medical workforce.***

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Recap: Broad aims of the evaluation

- To determine effectiveness of RTH in addressing inequitable geographical distribution of the medical workforce in Australia.

- To quantify the economic benefit of the RTH program.

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Methods

- Theory driven program logic evaluation framework

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes
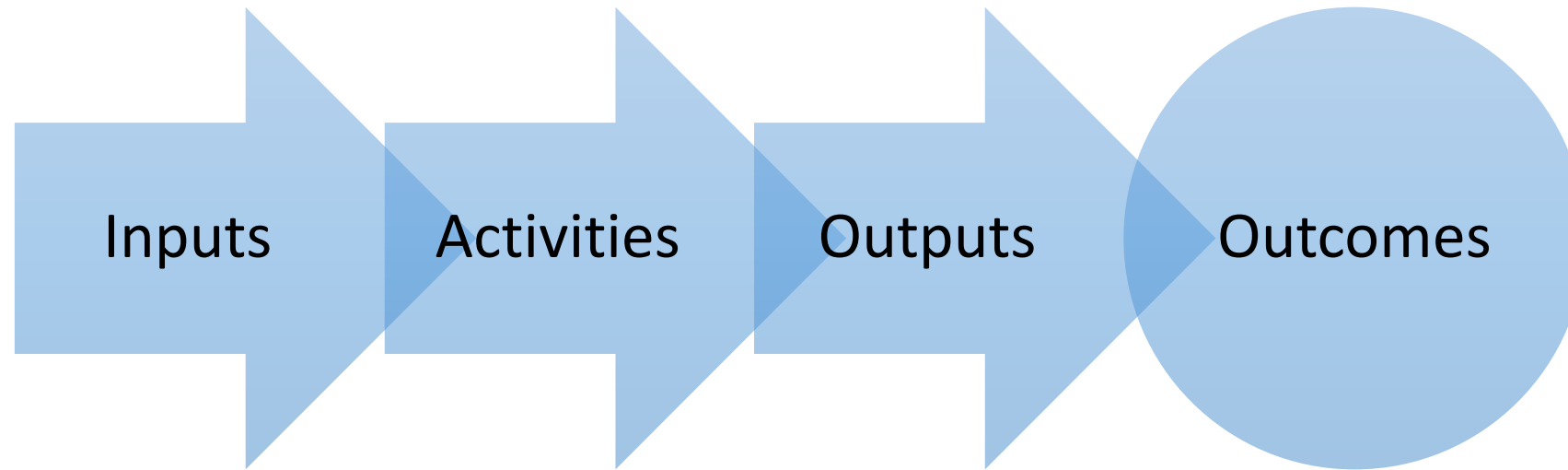
- Mixed methods
- Multiple lines and levels of evidence

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Program logic evaluation framework

Outcomes

- *Improved recruitment & retention* of medical graduates & specialists to rural & remote areas;

- *Improved distribution* of medical graduates and specialists within rural and remote areas;

- *Increased health service utilisation*;

- Descriptions of *lessons learned* from the regional training hubs initiative;

- *Economic analysis* of costs and benefits of increased rural and regional training positions

Quantitative Methods

- Data collected annually to form longitudinal datasets:
  - RTH managers/directors - spreadsheet – students, training positions, specialists (including fellowed GPs/Rural Generalists)
  - Parameter 6 RHMTP Reports
  - AHPRA
  - National Health Workforce Dataset (DOH)
  - Rural Workforce Agencies National Minimum GP Dataset
  - Specialist Colleges
  - AGPT Minimum Data Set provided by the RTOs
- Calculation of key indicators
  - Short, medium and longer term

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Economic evaluation

- Cost – benefit analysis (value for money)
- Top-down approach to measuring costs of each additional GP and specialist training place (budgets and expenditure by RTHs & funders of extra training places)
  - Costs including salaries, travel, supplies and training activities
- Monetary benefits of additional training places measured using contingent valuation techniques (how much key stakeholders are **willing to pay** for each additional training places)
  - Willingness to pay survey
- Return on investment (ratio of benefits to total costs)

Qualitative methods

- Focus on *describing, understanding and interpreting the relationships* between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes

- Series of case studies of individual hubs
  - Drawing on Realist Evaluation to explore Context, Mechanism & Outcome relationships and differences and commonalities between RTHs
  - Cross-case analysis to develop a typology of RTHs

- Contribution analysis
  - Appropriateness of attributing observed changes to RTHs

Qualitative methods *(continued)*

- Collaborative Outcomes Reporting
  - Engaging RTH staff in analysis, assessment, synthesis and interpretation of causal claims to broaden assessment of evidence and its credibility and further develop program logic
- Data collection may employ the following:
  - Document review (Stakeholder information, routine reports)
  - Surveys
  - Interviews
  - Drawing on findings from discrete projects undertaken by RTHs

Progress: formalising governance

- Proposed governance of the national evaluation of RTHs:

  1. A *Working Group* (WG) of researchers responsible for finalising the design, collaborative implementation and documentation of the project.

  2. A broader *Evaluation Reference Group* (ERG), inclusive of all RTHs staff who wish to participate. The WG + ERG will form the *Evaluation Collaborative* (EC).

  3. The EC will report to the *Management Group* (MG), which consists of FRAME and UDRH directors with RTHs. The MG has the final decision-making authority in relation to ratifying design and receiving progress reports as well as facilitating efficient implementation of the project.

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