Title: Rural Health Professionals Program - what can we learn about recruitment and distribution of nurses and allied health professionals in rural and remote Australia?

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2013

Reviewer: Lucio Naccarella

Reviewer's report:

1. The topic and question posed by the authors is of national relevance and significance.
2. The use of mixed methods is appropriate. However, the qualitative methodology, methods, analytical, interpretive process requires much more details - to reveal the transparency and rigor of the qualitative evidence and how it complements or challenges the quantitative evidence.
3. The qualitative data requires much greater analysis as per my point 2 above.
4. Table 7 - Reason for interest - it would most useful and revealing if this information could be crossed with Profession and age groups.
5. Table 8 - retention support accessed - it would be useful to cross this information by Profession and Age group. Furthermore, in terms of Retention support Other =76 - further information is required as 76 times is a large number.
6. On page 5 the authors list 6 dot points re: Recruitment Case Management services - however, no data is presented re; whether any use was made of these services - please explain.
7. The results are limited as it is only 1 year - can the authors hypothesise what predictors of retention exist from this work.
8. Conclusion section is far too brief - could the authors consider what implications their study has for current policy, practices and further research.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field.

Quality of written English: Acceptable.

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.