

# Prospectus



**Rural  
Health**  
Research  
Foundation



**Peter Treseder**  
Chair

As Chair, I am honoured to stand with the Rural Health Research Foundation in supporting the people and projects driving real and lasting improvements in regional health across Australia. Strong communities are built on practical, evidence-based solutions, on local ideas conceived, tested and proven within their own settings. Our Foundation is dedicated to nurturing, enabling them to grow, thrive and deliver broader impact. Together, we are strengthening the health and vitality of rural, regional and remote Australia.

After a lifetime of work across the corporate sector, fundraising, and health philanthropy, I've seen firsthand how targeted investment, trusted partnerships and sustained support for researchers can transform outcomes for families and communities. This experience has inspired me to take a leadership role with the Foundation, to help connect generosity with ideas that improve access, quality and dignity of care for people living beyond our cities.

Our commitment spans the full lifespan - from pregnancy and early childhood through to ageing and end of life - reflecting the simple truth that health matters at every stage of life. By investing in local research and nurturing the expertise of regional researchers, health professionals, and community leaders we are supporting solutions that are practical, culturally grounded, and capable of lasting impact.

I invite you to join us, as a donor, partner, volunteer or advocate. Together we can turn local knowledge into lasting improvements in health and wellbeing for people and communities across regional Australia.



**Cass Wilson**  
Executive Officer  
Carolyn Vincent Chair

I have a deep love for rural, regional and remote communities, having spent most of my life living and working in them. Their resilience, talent and local knowledge never cease to inspire me. These communities are full of great ideas and practical solutions; they just need the right backing to bring them to life.

The Rural Health Research Foundation is a way to make that happen. It is built on the belief that rural people are best placed to solve rural challenges. I am excited to lead a movement that champions regional capability, supporting the incredible work already happening across our regions, turning good ideas into action and ensuring that health research and innovation reach every community, not just the cities.

I have seen what happens when communities are supported to lead, the pride, the energy and the results. I am here to build on that foundation by connecting funding with purpose, people with opportunity and research with real life outcomes that improve health and wellbeing across regional Australia.

## Our Story



Sometimes, change begins in the simplest way — with a conversation. A handful of people sat down together: senior health researchers, community leaders, and subject experts. What started as sharing experiences quickly turned into imagining a different future.

What if regional Australia had equitable investment, opportunities, and support for innovation as our cities?

### ***That question lit a spark.***

We realised something important. In metropolitan areas, charitable foundations sit right alongside health services, universities, and community organisations. They attract investment, create opportunities for collaboration, and shine a light on success stories. They do it so effectively that around 96% of research funding flows to major cities, leaving only 4% for everywhere else.

But here's our superpower: regional Australia already has the people and the passion. There are researchers, clinicians, and community innovators who live in these rural, regional and

remote areas, who see the challenges firsthand, and who are already working on solutions to improve health and wellbeing. They believe in their work. What they need is financial support to keep it moving, visibility to share their impact, and a bold advocate to fight for rural investment.

That's where the Rural Health Research Foundation comes in.

With the backing of our Chair, Peter Treseder, the energy of a committed Board, and my own determination to build something from the ground up, the Foundation began to take shape. From the very beginning, we didn't design it alone. We co-designed our Mission, Vision, Approach, and Values with the people who matter most, our researchers, health workers, regional leaders, and people with lived experience.

That first conversation has turned into a movement.

The groundwork is laid, and now the real work begins by investing in rural innovation, amplifying local research, and improving health outcomes for regional Australians.

## Inaugural Ambassador



### **The Hon. Bronnie Taylor** **Ambassador**

I have chosen to support the Rural Health Research Foundation because its purpose closely reflects my own experience and values. Throughout my life and career, I have seen how much strength, insight and capability exists in rural and regional communities and how often that potential goes under-recognised and under-resourced.

Before entering public life, I spent many years working as a nurse in cancer and palliative care, supporting individuals and families in regional settings through some of the most challenging moments of their lives. Later, as a Minister for Regional Health, Mental Health and Women, I saw the same truth reflected at a system level, that the most effective solutions are grounded in local knowledge, informed by evidence, and shaped by the communities they are designed to serve.

The Rural Health Research Foundation exists to support exactly that kind of work. It recognises that rural people are not waiting to be told what to do, they are already leading innovation and finding practical ways to improve health and wellbeing, both within the hospital system and across their communities. What they need is sustained investment, trusted partnerships and the opportunity to grow ideas that work locally into solutions with broader impact.

I am honoured to serve as the Foundation's inaugural Ambassador and to champion work I genuinely believe in. If we are serious about closing the gap in health outcomes between city and country, we must be willing to invest in rural-led research and innovation. The Rural Health Research Foundation provides a credible, trusted pathway to do exactly that.

## Our Approach

We find and direct funding to where it can make the greatest difference empowering regional researchers, health professionals, and communities to find better ways to solve health challenges across rural, regional and remote Australia.

We bring together the right people, evidence, and ideas to turn knowledge into action, improving how care is delivered, strengthening local capacity, and creating lasting change in health and wellbeing.

Everything we do is built on collaboration, trust, and a shared belief that regional communities deserve the very best.

### Mission

To generate funding for regional researchers, health professionals, and community innovators, to drive research and innovation that leads to real and lasting improvements in health and wellbeing for regional Australia.

### Vision

Healthy and vibrant regional communities with stronger research capacity, smarter health systems developed, and bold, well-supported innovation that delivers real life health outcomes across regional Australia.

## Values

### 1. Rural, Regional and Remote Commitment

We are committed to rural, regional and remote researchers and ensure their work delivers real impact where it's needed most.

### 2. Research with Purpose

We fund high-quality, outcome-driven research that is equitable, impactful, and grounded in regional realities.

### 3. Placed-based Innovation

We champion innovations rooted in place driven by creativity, local knowledge, and a fairer share of resources and attention.

### 4. Bold and Authentic

We lead with trust, curiosity, and energy thinking big, acting boldly, and staying true to regional voices.

### 5. Unapologetically Ambitious

We seek philanthropic and other funding with confidence, driven by deep belief in the value of regional research and innovation.

## The Scale of the Problem

### The harsh reality of health outcomes in rural, regional and remote Australian communities.



Potentially avoidable deaths in Very Remote Australia are **2.5** times higher in males and **3.7** times higher in females.



Hospitalisations for coronary heart disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease are respectively **1.5x, 2.6x** and **346** times higher, when comparing Remote areas to Major Cities.



Dementia including Alzheimer's disease and cerebrovascular disease are among the **top five** health issues in Inner Regional areas.



Bowel cancer rates are higher in rural and remote areas compared to urban areas due to **limited** access to healthcare services, reduced screening participation and not being exposed to public health campaigns.



Diabetes and suicide are among the **top five** killers in Remote and Very Remote areas.

### Compounding effects of not funding rural health research and community innovation

#### High-risk behaviours

- Higher smoking & excessive alcohol consumption
- Poorer mental health outcomes

#### Lack of access to healthcare

- Remote areas lack primary care
- Delayed care leads to avoidable hospitalisations

#### Poorer Health Outcomes

- Lower life expectancy compared to city counterpart
- Higher prevalence of chronic disease and lower survival rates



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer are in the **top five** leading causes outside of Major Cities.



It was estimated that people living in rural and remote areas were **more likely** to engage in risky behaviours, compared with people living in Major cities.



Loneliness affects approximately **35%** of rural Australians with detrimental impacts on physical, emotional, and social health.



Limited access to prevention programs and early diagnosis **multiplies** future health costs and contributes to the higher rates of chronic disease and premature and preventable deaths in rural and remote areas.

# \$14.30

The higher rates of preventable disease in rural areas can lead to higher long-term healthcare costs due to the need for more intensive treatments and interventions.

Every dollar invested in preventative health saves **\$14.30** in healthcare and other costs.

# Health & Wellbeing Lifespan

We are taking a lifespan approach to improving health and wellbeing in rural, regional and remote Australia.

From birth through to end-of-life, people in regional communities experience distinct health challenges shaped by geography, access, and opportunity.

By supporting research and innovation across every stage of life, we can make lasting improvements to the health systems, services, and communities that support them.

Our focus areas reflect the key touchpoints where health and wellbeing are shaped and sustained.



## Pregnancy, Birth & Early Years

Giving every child the best start through healthy pregnancies, safe births, and strong early development.

## Children & Adolescents

Supporting healthy growth, learning, and resilience during the formative years.

## Young Adults

Strengthening the transition to independence, mental health, and connection to community.

## Adults

Enabling access to quality care, healthy lifestyles, and support for those balancing work, family, and wellbeing.

## Older Adults & Seniors

Promoting healthy ageing, independence, and community participation.

## End-of-Life & Palliative Care

Ensuring dignity, comfort, and compassionate care through life's final chapter.

## Funding Streams

Through two complementary funding streams, we support both health services research and quality improvement within hospitals and health settings, and community-led innovation that drives practical, grassroots solutions.

### Stream 1

#### Health Services Research & Quality Improvement



- Focuses on practitioner-led research in rural, regional and remote hospitals and health services to make care safer, more effective, and easier to access.
- Funded projects could look at how health services are delivered and organised and test ways to improve patient care, service efficiency, Artificial Intelligence use, and overall system performance
- Prioritises improvements that benefit the whole community rather than just individual patients.
- Uses structured, data-driven approaches to identify problems, test changes, measure results, and refine practices.
- All research projects are designed to turn findings into real-world improvements in health services, enhancing safety, efficiency, and wellbeing for regional communities.

### Stream 2

#### Health & Community Innovation



- Focuses on community-led and technology-driven projects that improve health and wellbeing in rural, regional and remote communities.
- Projects could use new approaches and tools such as tele or virtual health, digital and AI platforms, and co-designed programs with local communities
- Helps people take an active role in shaping health solutions that meet their local needs.
- Works to make health services more accessible, effective, and sustainable, with a focus on prevention and person-centred care.
- All projects are designed to turn innovative ideas into real-life outcomes, improving access, care, and wellbeing.

# Help Change Regional Health Outcomes

## Philanthropic Giving

Help fund research, innovation, and community impact across rural, regional and remote Australia. Major gifts can create enduring change through one-off or multi-year contributions, such as establishing a named research grant or scholarship. Named funds or endowments can honour a family, community, or organisation by providing ongoing support in a chosen focus area. Regular giving, through monthly or annual donations, provides reliable, sustained funding for community-led innovation.

## Bequests and Wills

Bequests and legacy giving allow donors to leave a lasting gift in their will to strengthen the future of rural health research. A bequest can establish a named fund, contribute to an endowment, or support priority research areas, ensuring long-term impact for regional communities. This form of giving creates a meaningful legacy that continues to support healthier futures for generations to come.

## Corporate and Business Partnerships

Join with us to invest in healthier rural communities while strengthening your organisation's regional impact and brand. Strategic partnerships can involve co-designing multi-year programs that align with corporate values and goals, such as supporting digital health innovation. Businesses can also participate through sponsorships of events or research showcases, workplace giving and matched donations, or by providing in-kind support such as goods, services, or professional expertise.

## Government and Institutional Partnerships

Work alongside us to scale successful local solutions and strengthen regional health systems. Governments and agencies can co-invest in initiatives that align with regional health and workforce priorities, partner on evaluation and knowledge translation to inform policy, or support capacity building and leadership across the rural health sector.

## Research and Academic Collaboration

Partner with us to advance knowledge, share data, and translate research into real-world outcomes. Opportunities include co-funding research projects with universities, health services, or government agencies through the Foundation's grants program. Organisations can also host or mentor early-career researchers through rural-based fellowships and placements or share expertise by joining our review panels and community advisory groups.

## Community and Grassroots Support

Empower local communities to shape their own health futures. Individuals and groups can run community fundraising events such as local walks, challenges, or campaigns that raise funds for specific focus areas. Donor circles can bring together groups of people to pool contributions and support community-driven research, while volunteers can contribute time, networks, or local insight to strengthen rural engagement and outreach.

## Ambassadorship and Advocacy

Help us build awareness and momentum for rural health research. Ambassadors can represent and promote the Foundation's mission publicly, while storytellers and media partners can share stories of research impact, lived experience, and community innovation. Supporters can also use their networks to introduce new partners, funders, or collaborators who share our vision for healthier regional Australia.

## Examples of Support in Action



**Carolyn Vincent**  
**Ubuntu Foundation Founder**



### **The Carolyn Vincent Ubuntu Foundation**

We are honoured to acknowledge Carolyn Vincent and the Ubuntu Foundation as our inaugural philanthropic supporter. Carolyn's early belief in our mission helped bring the Rural Health Research Foundation to life. The Ubuntu Foundation's generosity has been catalytic and has enabled us to establish the Foundation, build trusted relationships across government, health, community, First Nations organisations, universities and lived-experience advocates and launch our first community grants program.

This partnership has set the standard for what meaningful rural philanthropy looks like - personal, intentional, and anchored in trust. Her contribution has shaped the early DNA of the Foundation and shown what is possible when philanthropy stands with regional communities.

### **The Ubuntu Foundation Community Innovation Grants**

Through the Ubuntu Foundation, we launched our first community grants program supporting initiatives that reduce isolation, strengthen belonging, and back grassroot health innovation.

The Foundation leads the program on behalf of the Ubuntu Foundation, ensuring it is strategic, professional, and impactful, while the funding remains place-based, directly benefiting the communities that matter most.

# Enquiries

For all media, funding and project enquiries, please contact our executive officer Cassandra Wilson.

## Cassandra Wilson

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# Corporate Information

- *Public Benevolent Institution (PBI)*
- *Income Tax Exempt Charity and a Deductible Gift Recipient*

The Mid North Coast Rural Health and Medical Research Foundation Limited trading as Rural Health Research Foundation status as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) was confirmed in August 2024 by the Australian Taxation Office as part of its registration requirements for all non-profit entities, as was the organisation's status as an Income Tax Exempt Charity and a Deductible Gift Recipient.

The Mid North Coast Rural Health and Medical Research Foundation Limited is registered as required by law in each State and Territory where it raises funds as follows:

New South Wales (Registration number CFN 27424 – renewable in 2028)

The Mid North Coast Rural Health and Medical Research Foundation Limited trading as Rural Health Research Foundation is a public company limited by guarantee (ABN 680 167 506). The Rural Health Research Foundation's auditor is PDD Advisory Group. Banking by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

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