Attracting trainee teachers to rural and remote NSW schools
The problem
Rural and remote students perform worse than metro students on some basic indicators.

Source: data from Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority data for 2016 NAPLAN - year 7 NSW students.
The traditional approach takes an economic perspective

Assumption: Costs (accommodation & transport) are too large a barrier

Assumption: Financial incentives are required

Fact: Only 2-3% trainee teachers do practicums in rural/remote in NSW
Why do very few trainee teachers do their practicums in rural/remote NSW?

**Choice architecture**
- Defaults and process: rural and remote schools are not being offered

**Uncertainty avoidance, familiarity heuristic and status quo bias**
- Choose familiar schools and resist change

**Influential messengers**
- Opinions of parents, peers and friends are over-emphasised
The interventions
We ran three trials making rural/remote placements easier, attractive, social and timely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy: research &amp; forms</th>
<th>Attractive: salience</th>
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<td>Timely: reminders</td>
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We removed the friction cost of opening mail, and encouraged conversation with other members of the household.
The behaviourally informed communications (email, postcard and text) tripled the rural/remote applications.

Proportion of students submitting an application

Control: 4.24% (5 students)
Treatment: 12.60%* (15 students)

\[ n = 237, \ p = 0.0269 \]
* \( p < 0.05 \), ** \( p < 0.01 \), *** \( p < 0.001 \)
We ran three trials making rural/remote placements easier, attractive, social and timely

| Easy: research & forms |
| Attractive: salience |
| Timely: reminders |

| Easy: research |
| Attractive: testimonial |
| Social: group placement |

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA

MACQUARIE University
A video testimonial used an influential messenger to encourage applications
The video testimonial, group opportunity and reduced research, led to a directional, non-significant, increase in applications.

Proportion of students submitting an application

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<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4 students)</td>
<td>n = 81, p = 0.116</td>
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We ran three trials making rural/remote placements easier, attractive, social and timely

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<td>Attractive: halve costs</td>
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The text reminder was timely: sent three days prior to the application deadline
The application form made choosing a peer easy by offering a default where WSU would find a match.

BIU in NSW
Peer-placements created more interest:

The treatment group did significantly more research and consulted with parents and peers significantly more than the control group.

(but there was spill-over....)
What have we learnt?
Lessons and next steps

1. Universities learned new processes: simple application forms, postcards and reminder texts.

2. UOW and MQU are already in the process of rolling out the interventions.

3. BIU and DoE are actively working on scaling this to other metropolitan universities.
Questions