

# Attract Connect Stay

An evidenced-based,  
person-centred, place-based solution  
for  
strengthening rural Australia's  
professional & skilled workforces

**Dr Cath Cosgrave**

# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like us to take a moment to reflect on the meaning of place and connection.

In the spirit of reconciliation, I wish acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we meet today. And pay my respects to their elders past and present and emerging. I extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.





Attract Connect Stay.

# What is Attract Connect Stay?



## My story

*Wanting to make a  
difference ?*

# In search of a good news story.....

## PhD study explored why did they choose to stay ?

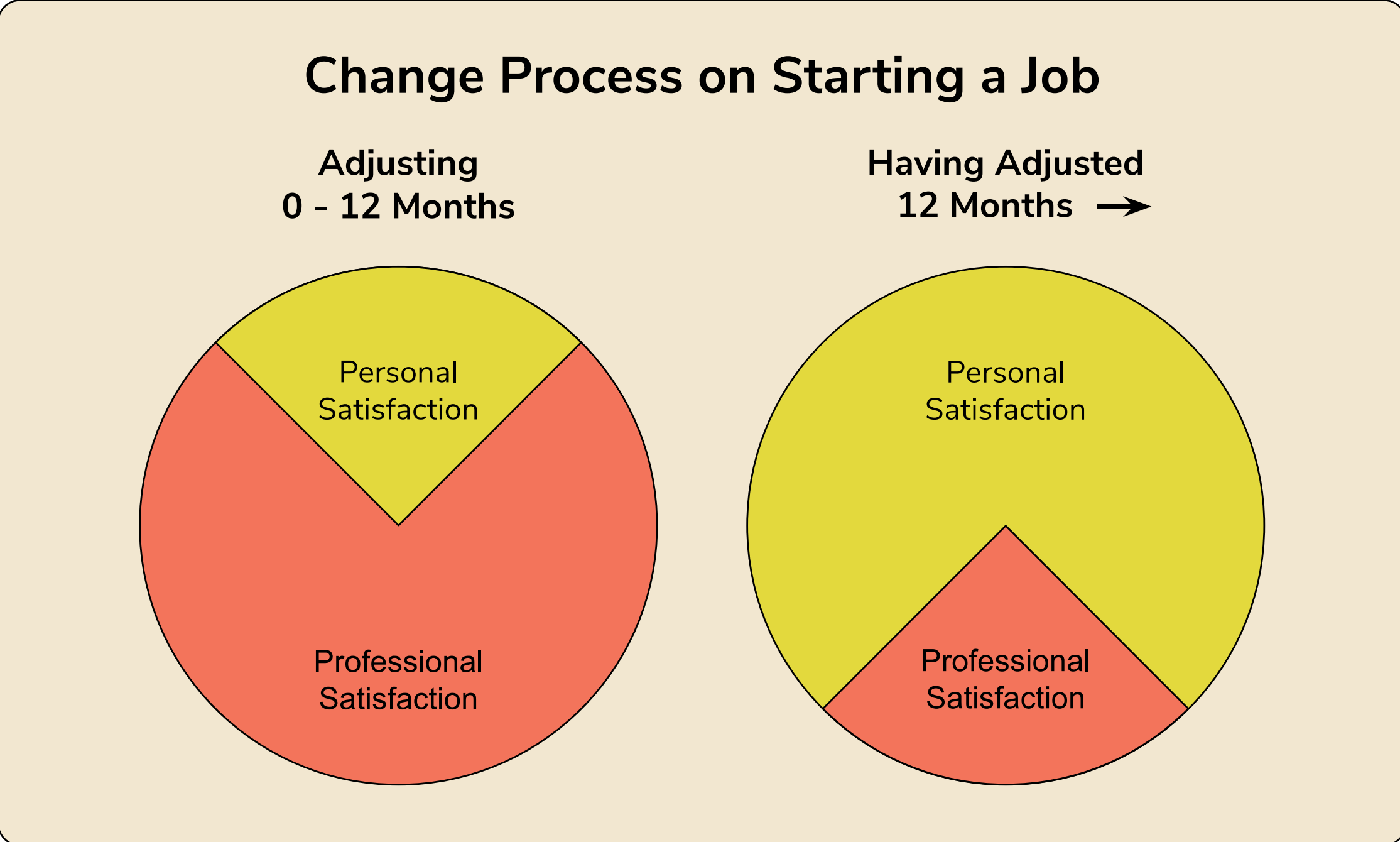
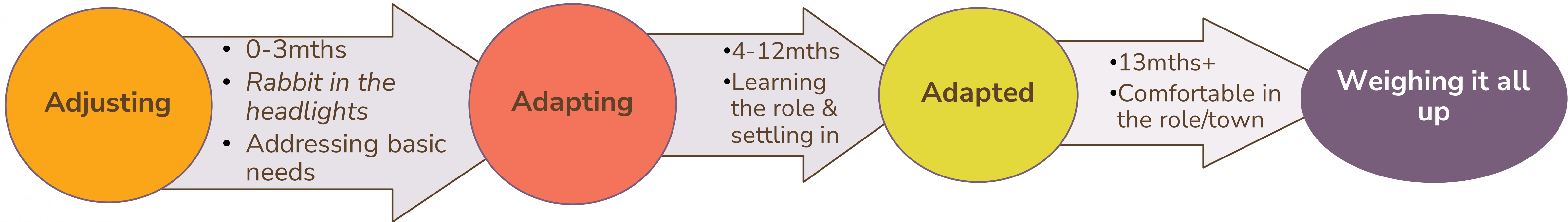
### Key findings:

- Job and personal satisfaction are key measures.
- Key job satisfaction factors: scope of role, relationships, PD , career oppprtunities
- Key personal factors: extent of social connection/sense of belonging, future life aspirations
- Newcomers initially feel alienated (welcoming but not inclusive), but sense of belonging increases over time.
- Three primary elements most significantly impact job & personal satisfaction:
  - Life stage
  - Career stage
  - Degree of familiarity with the place/ rural living



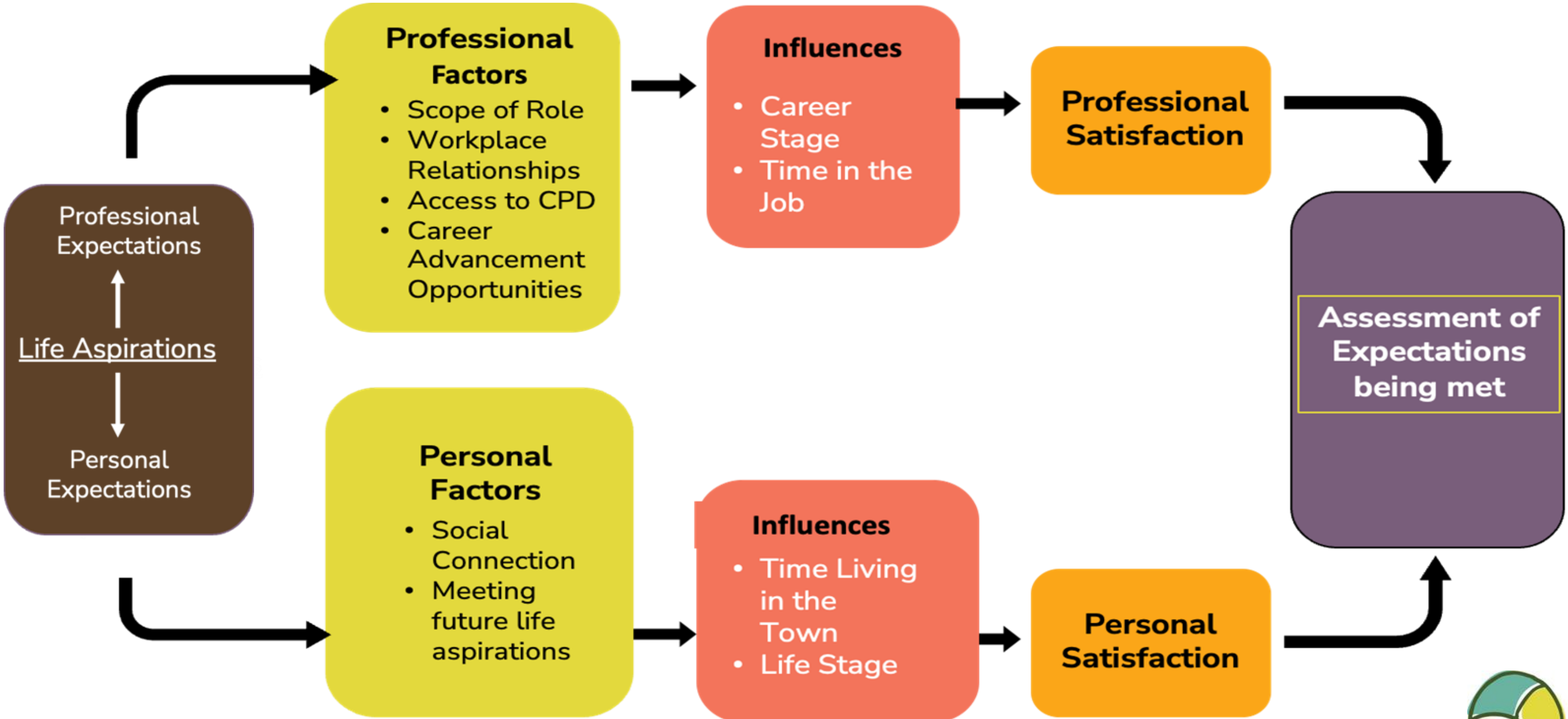
# An explanation of turnover of rural health professionals

## Basic Social Process - Adjusting to change



# An explanation of turnover of rural health professionals

A rural-based professional's stay/leave decision hinges on the gap between their life expectations & the realities of the job & rural living experience



# Life stage

People's professional & personal interests differ

Life Stage	Early Adulthood	Middle Adulthood	Senior Adulthood
<b>Age Bracket (approx.)</b>	Early to mid 20s	Mid-late 20s to early-mid 50s	Mid-late 50s+
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly mobile</li> <li>Experience seeking</li> <li>Experimental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling down/stable</li> <li>Family formation</li> <li>Place attachment strengthens at entry point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing family commitments</li> <li>More mobile</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills development and support</li> <li>Career advancement opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible work arrangements</li> <li>Career opportunities in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaving a legacy</li> <li>Career consolidation</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pair bonding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work/life balance</li> </ul>	



# Career Stage

Less experienced longer adjustment & more support needed

Career Stages	Years
Early Career (Beginner)	0 > 3 yrs
Early Career (Intermediate)	3 > 5 yrs
Experienced	5 > 10 yrs
Highly Experienced	10+ yrs

# Familiarity with place / rural living

Workers recruited from elsewhere need support to settle & connect

Concept Term	Current Location
Locals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Locals currently living in rural/regional hometown</li></ul>
Ex Local Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Locals who have been living away – either in a city or another rural/regional town</li></ul>
Other Rural Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People currently living in another rural/regional town</li></ul>
City Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People currently living in cities</li></ul>
Overseas Newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People currently living overseas</li></ul>





# Jacob's story

*Early adulthood  
Early career - Beginner  
Overseas newcomer*

*"You know in a town like [X]... it's very difficult if you're not from here or brought up here or you don't know much about country Australia when you arrive. I was shocked when I arrived here and there was dogs on the back of utes and cowboy hats, it was like Texas to me. It was just so: 'Oh my god, where am I?' type of thing"*





# Called to action

Urgent need for a Framework to support successful attraction & retention of rural health professionals

- **Person-centred**
- **Place-based**
- **Community-focused**

# Attract Connect Stay Framework#

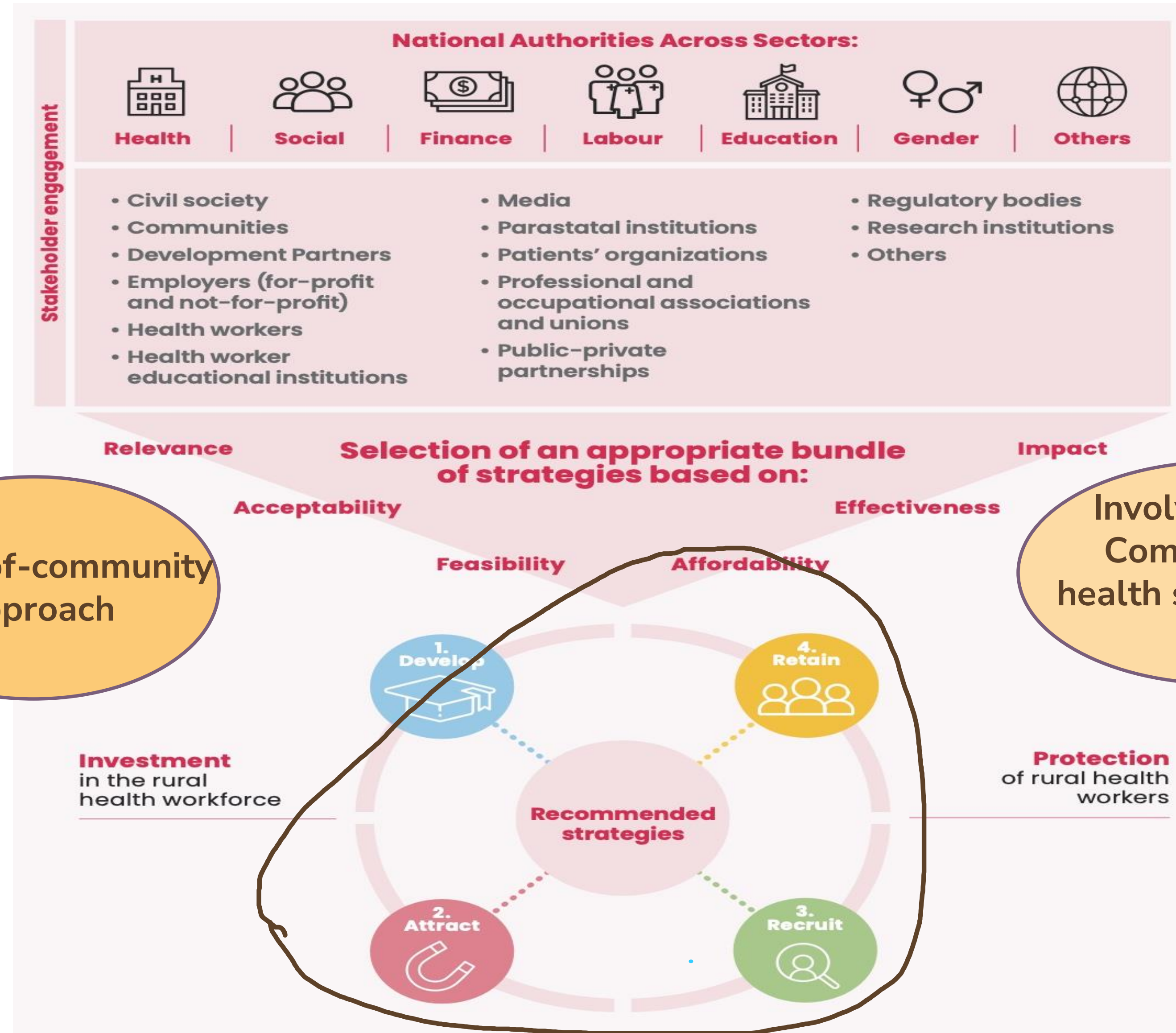


# previously called the Whole-of-Person Retention Improvement Framework - WoP-RIF



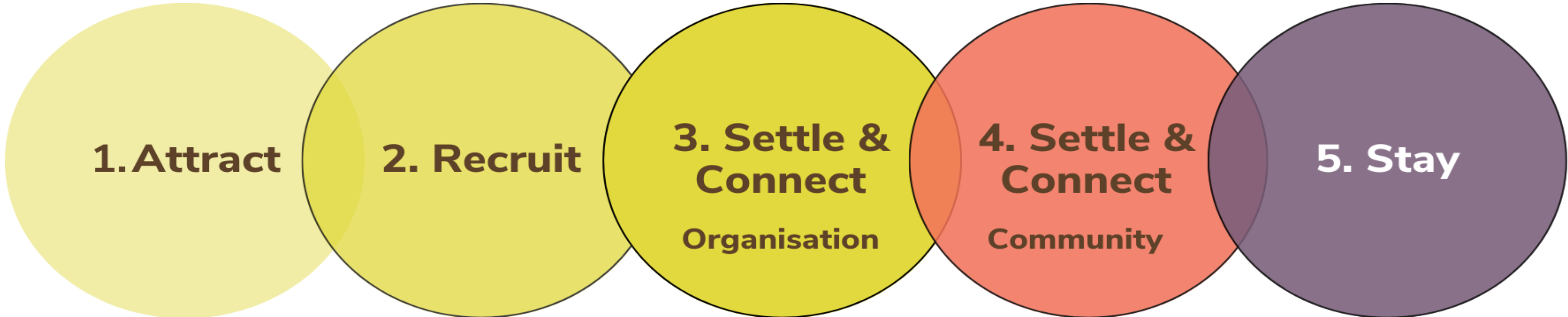
# WHO 2021 guidelines on rural health workforce

*“Interventions should be interconnected, bundled and tailored to the local context”*





# Five steps for Implementing Attract Connect Stay Framework



Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

Recruiting the 'best-fit' candidate

Settling & Connecting new staff effectively into the organisation

Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the local community

Supporting staff in person-centered ways to foster their professional & personal development, so they want to stay

# Tonight's Focus

1. Attract

Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

4. Settle & Connect  
*Community*

Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community



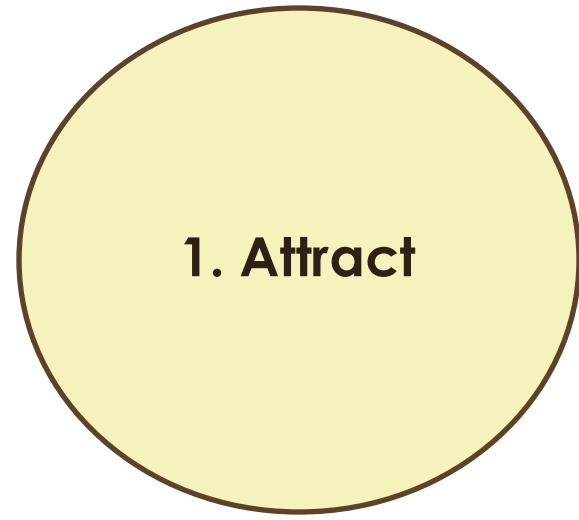
# Today's Focus

1. Attract

Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates







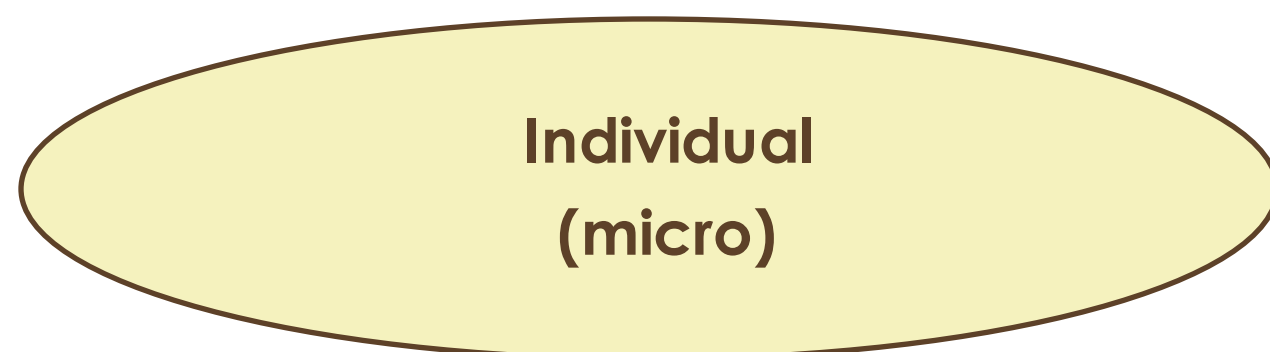
Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

## Learning Objectives:

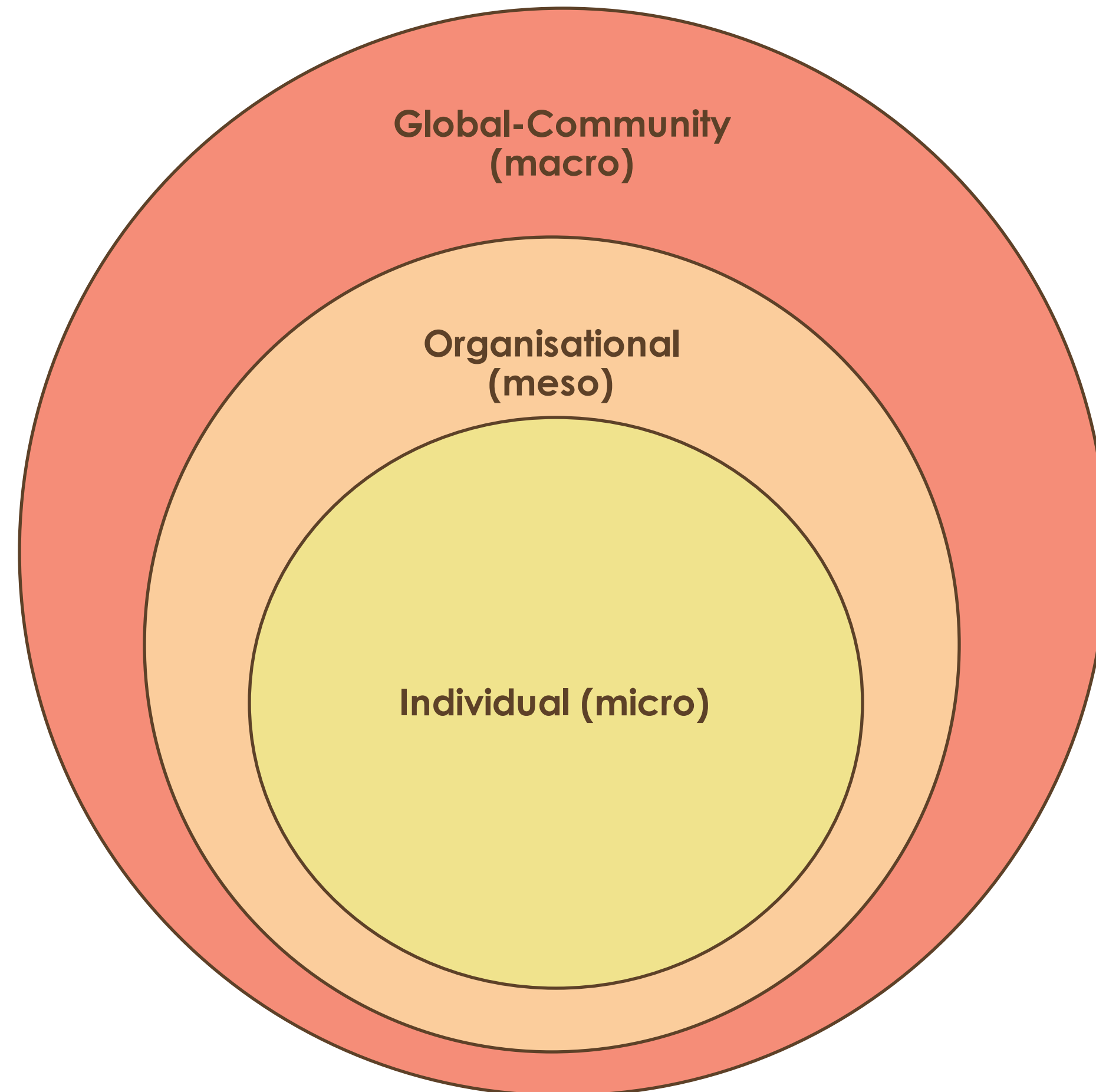
1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy



2. Create a Tailored Recruit Campaign For Vacancies



## Addressing contextual challenges

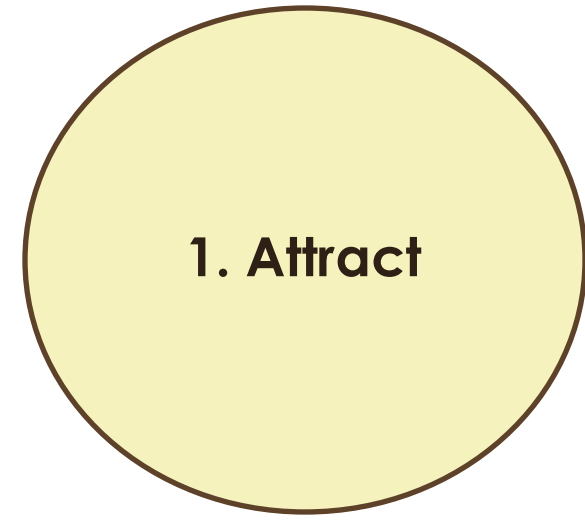


**Global-Community context:** wider systems and contexts (often policy and government) and the local community & economy

**Organisational context:** organisations, businesses, workplaces and employers

**Individual context:** new-to-area, skilled professionals (and their partners and other family members)





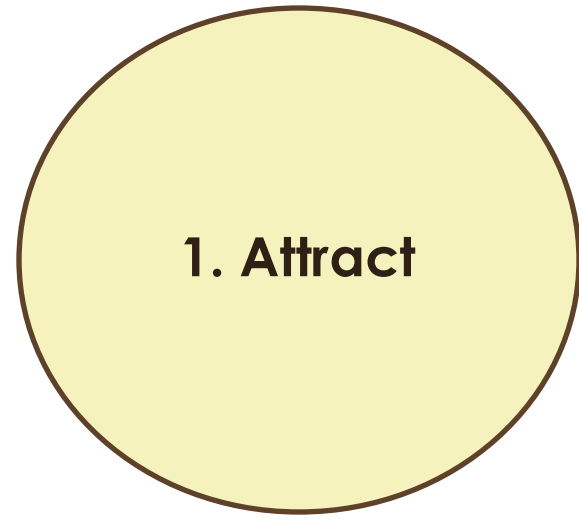
## Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

### What is an 'Ideal' Candidate...

...for a rural or regional position is:

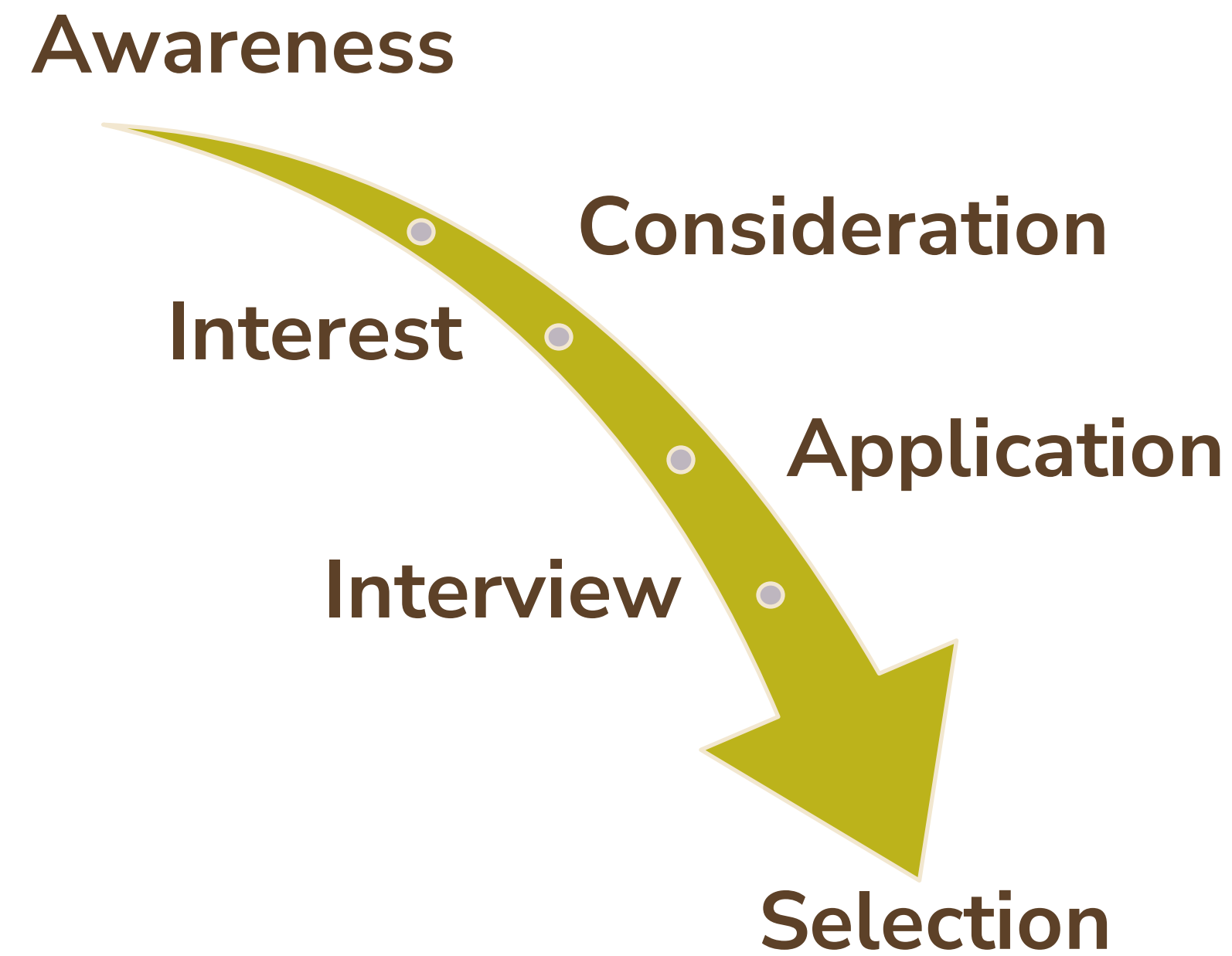
- Has the appropriate professional skills & experience;
- Is interested in practising rurally/regionally;
- Has interests that match well with the assets of the local community & the geographical area.

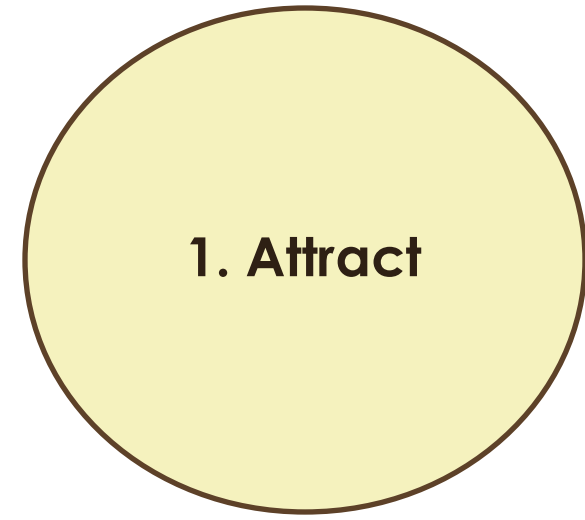




Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

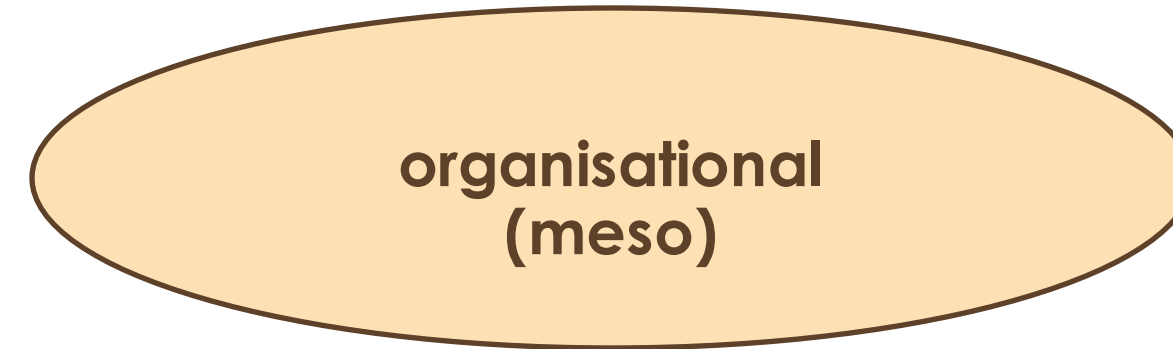
## Six stages of a future employee's recruitment journey





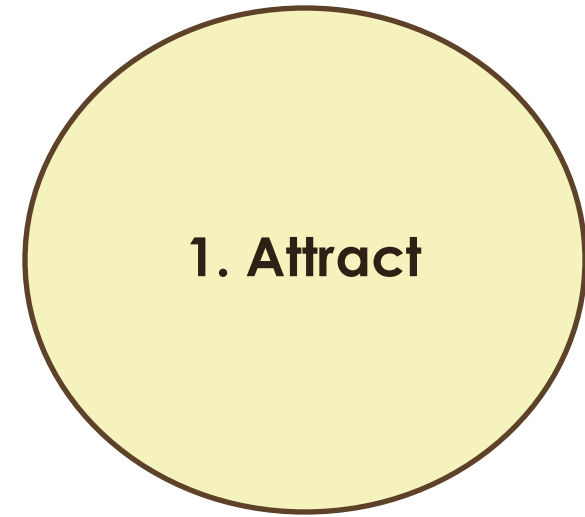
Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

## STEPS



# 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy

- I. What will your strengthened workforce look like?
- II. Know what attracts people to work at your organisation?
- III. Apply 'hard-to-recruit' categorisation to vacancies and assign incentives



Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates



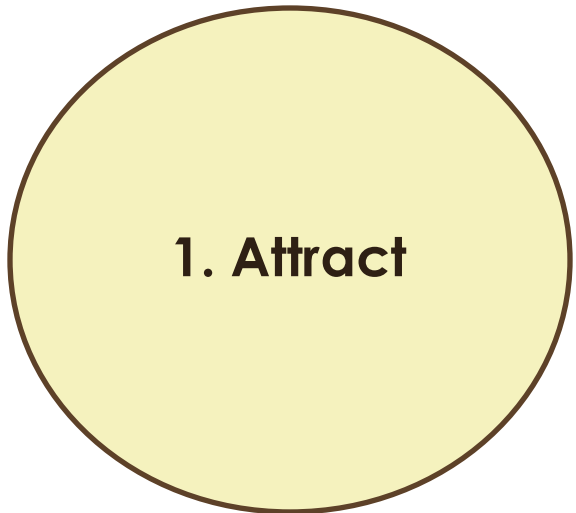
## 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy

- I. What will your strengthened workforce look like?

*Set your success measure(s)*



# Attract Connect Stay.



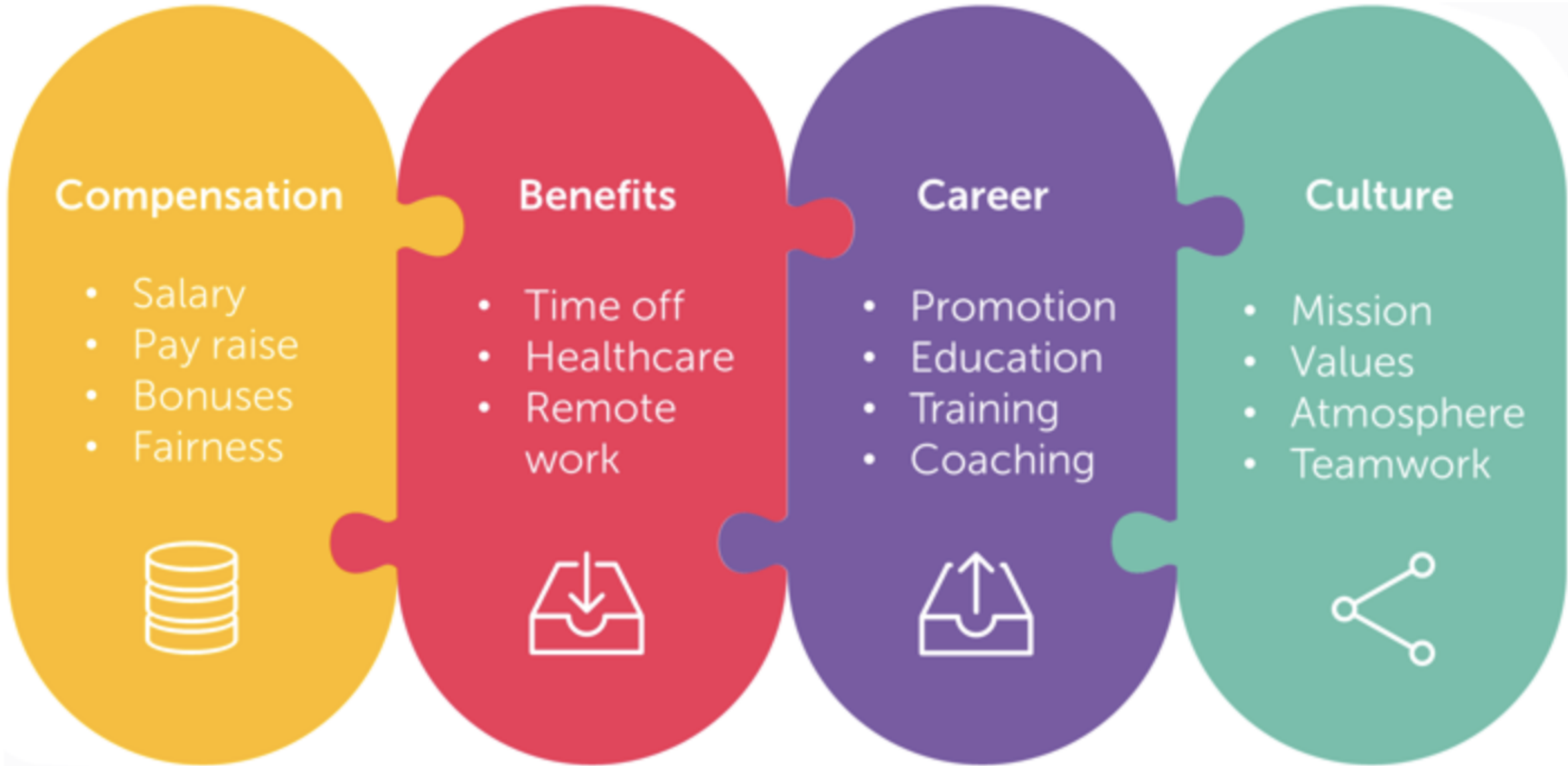
Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates



## 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy

### II. Know what attracts people to work at your organisation?

### *Develop Your Employer Value Proposition*

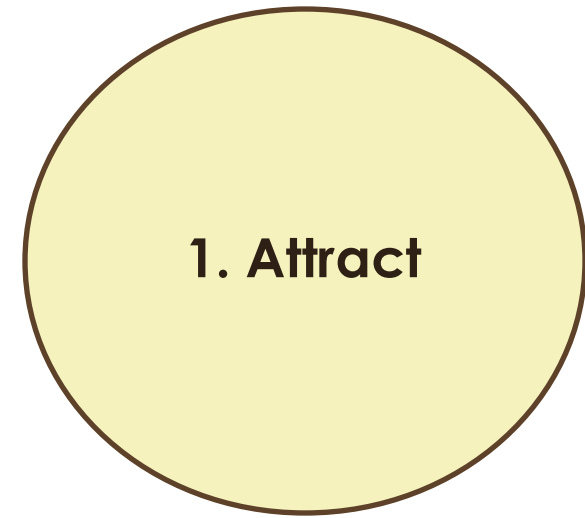


**Long form used in JD**

*At XXX we pride ourselves on our strong teamwork and our shared commitment to providing person-centered high-quality healthcare to the XXX community.*

**Short form used in Job Ad**

*We pride ourselves on our strong teamwork and providing person-centered, high-quality healthcare to our community.*



Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates



## 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy

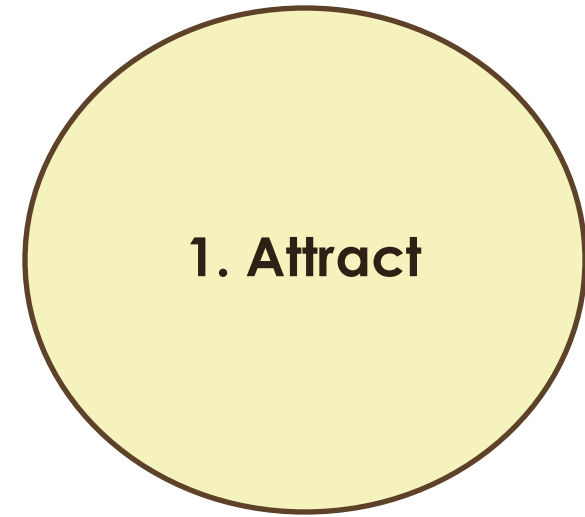
### II. What Attracts people to work at your organisation?

*Ask employees the one thing they most like about working at your organisation?*

An EVP should be:

- Succinct and clear
- Highlight what's most important to staff
- Capture why they choose to stay,
- Include what org offers that sets it apart from competitors

**SUGGESTION:** create a free Google Forms Survey to collect data - ChatGPT (or similar) to review data, draft EVP



Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

## 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy



### III. Apply 'hard-to-recruit' categorisation to vacancies and assign incentives

- *Establish hard-to-recruit categories*
- *Set relocation incentives for each hard-to recruit' category*

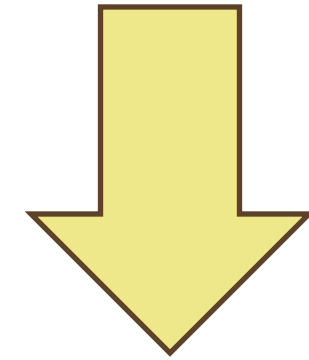


# Establish hard-to-recruit categories

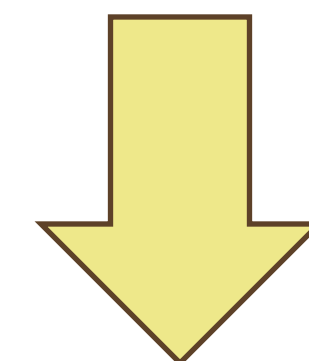
## Factors that may make one category move into the next:

- Size of pool of 'locally' available talent
- If relocation is required
- Size of pool of state & nationally available talent
- If the role is not appealing / not comparable to other similar roles in other health services
- Level of experience or seniority required
- Level of specialist skills required
- If the role is unclear

**Category 1 'not difficult to recruit to'** – Recruited to within 30 days of advertising



**Category 2 'hard to recruit to'** – Recruited to within 90 days of advertising



**Category 3 'stubborn to recruit to'**  
– Remain vacant after 90+ days of advertising

- Recruited to after 1-2 advertising rounds or approximately 1 month
- Has 2 or more suitable applicants apply for the position
- Recruited to after 2 to 6 advertising rounds or approximately 1-3 months (30-90 days)
- Has at least 1 suitable applicant apply for the position
- Is not responsive to any number of advertising rounds (> 6) and continues to be vacant at least 3 (90+ days) months after initial advertising
- Has not had any *suitable applicants* apply

1. Attract

Attracting a strong pool of 'ideal' candidates

## 1. Develop your Employer Branding Strategy

organisational  
(meso)

### III. Apply 'hard-to-recruit' categorisation to vacancies and assign incentives

#### *Set relocation incentives for each 'hard-to recruit' category*

Proven incentives to strengthen attraction of out-of-region skilled workers:  
include:

- Relocation expenses to reduce/eliminate out-of-pocket moving costs
- Providing rental accommodation or financial support to cover temporary accommodation .
- Funding for external professional development



# Set relocation incentives for each 'hard-to recruit' category

## Category 1 (available to all staff)

- Flexible working arrangements
- External professional development + after 12 months
- Internal training and development opportunities
- Remuneration.
- Salary packaging
- Free on-site car parking
- Social
- Culture
- Discounts
- Support ( e.g Access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP))

## Category 2 (+category 1 benefits)

- Relocation costs
- **Short-term Accommodation and housing support**
- **External professional development funding in first year**
- Relocation costs
- **Short-term Accommodation and housing support**
- **External professional development funding in first year**

## Category 3 (+category 1 benefits)

## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community

### Learning objectives

- The origins of the CCP
- The impact so far of CCP in two rural Australian communities
- A different solution for remote
- CCP developments/ resources





## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community

*To retain health professionals, it is essential that the community itself is fully engaged in supporting any new-to-area health professionals and their families, to settle-in, make social connections & to thrive locally.*

## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community

### ACS - Community Connector Program

#### Background

- Awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate community-centred/led strategies to support new-to-area health professionals' (and family members) resettlement + social connection.
- Travelled to Canada in 2019 came across the Health Workforce Recruiter Connector model operating in the town of Marathon, Ontario.
- The Health Workforce Recruiter Connector position had been in place since 2009

#### Recruiter Connector's achievements

- Highly successful in attracting and retaining a broad range of health professionals
- Health professionals staying for the medium-to-long-term
- No vacant health professional positions since the inception of the position - despite severe health professional shortages in the region.





# Attract Connect Stay.

4. Settle & Connect  
Community

## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community Overview of Recruiter Connector – Marathon model

### 1. Attract

**Implementing attraction strategies** targeting health professionals who are a strong fit for job and the community

### 3. Settle & Connect - Community

**Providing individually tailored support** to health professionals & family members with settling-in (including partner employment) & making social connections

### 5. Stay

**Identifying and address systemic problems** around local services & infrastructure negatively impacting attraction & personal satisfaction of professionals – e.g. housing, schooling, childcare



### The Secret Sauce Ingredients

- Community-led & funded
- Management Committee – key stakeholders
- Contractor position- deliverables
- Flexible hrs. –responsive to needs
- Customer service concierge service
- Assets based community development approach
- Success is celebrated



## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community Impact so far of ACS - Community Connector Program in Australia

### FOCUS Primary health workforce

Glen Innes LGA (Small rural community, MM5, pop 9,000)

#### Key CCP Results

(August 2022 – May 31, 2023)

##### Attract & Recruit:

- GP (2), Speech Therapist, Pharmacist, RN

##### Personalised Concierge service

- 18 health professionals



#### Impact of Recruitment of 2GPs

(as of 31 March 2023)

- 1693 additional hours of GP care
- 118 patients taken off GP waiting list
- 153 existing patients continued healthcare





# Hayder's story

*Middle adulthood*

*Early career*

*Overseas newcomer*



# Attract Connect Stay.

4. Settle & Connect  
Community

## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community Impact so far of ACS - Community Connector Program in Australia

### FOCUS: Professionals & highly skilled workers

Shepparton LGA (Large rural town, MM3, 63,000 pop)

## Key Results

(Jan 2021 - Feb 2023)

### Referrals for attract/recruit information:

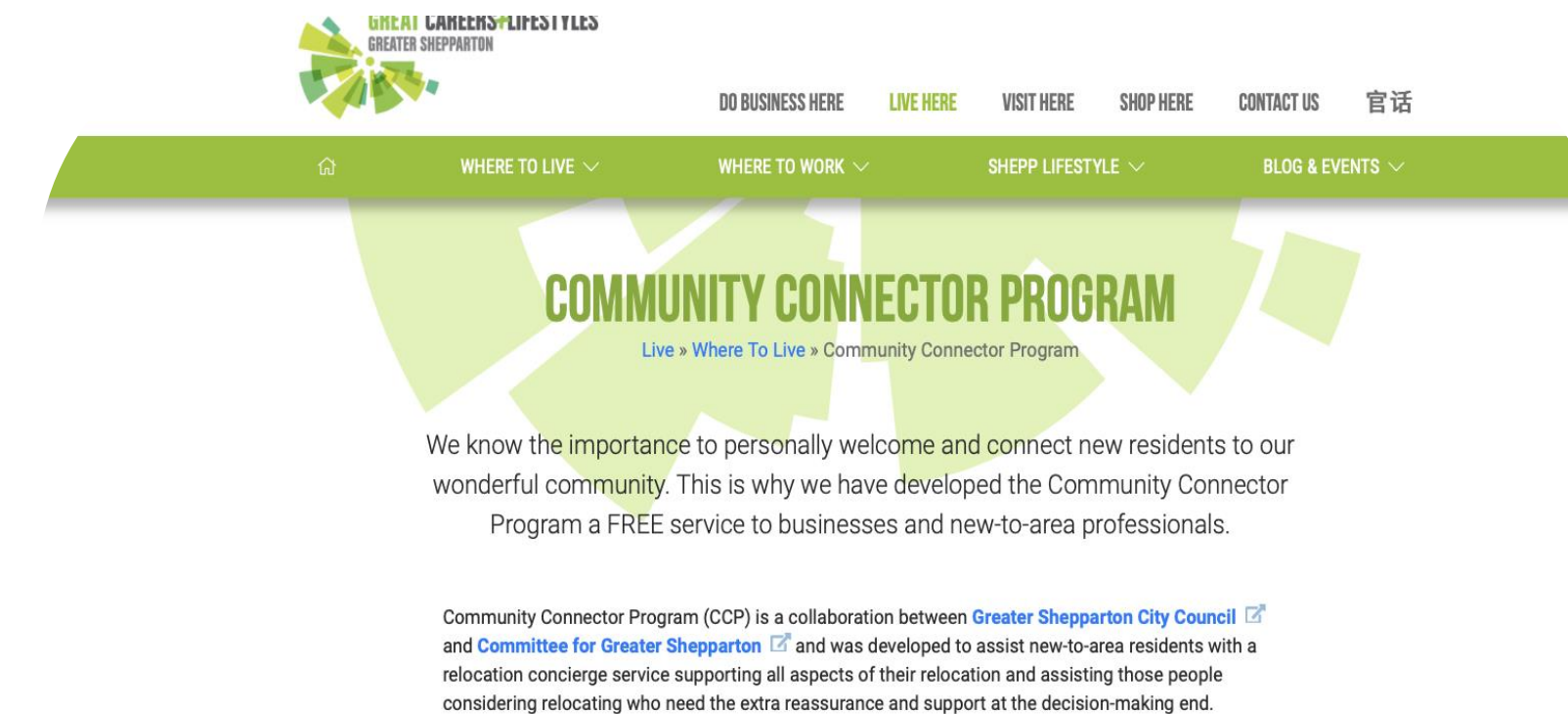
- 446 (57% health professionals)

### Support to local businesses with ACS attract/recruit:

- 94

### Personalised Concierge services:

- 287 individuals/families



This program was established using Dr. Cath Cosgrave's [Whole-of-Person Retention Improvement Framework](#) – a person-centred and holistic approach aimed at tackling the long-standing health workforce shortages facing rural communities – as well as findings from her [Churchill Fellowship](#) to Canada investigating effective approaches to strengthen the settlement and social connections of newly-arrived health workers in rural Australia. [Learn more.](#)

HERE'S HOW WE CAN HELP



# Attract Connect Stay.

4. Settle &  
Connect  
Community

## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community

### A different solution for remote

## CHECK out Outback Futures – WiWO Out Model

### Designed for remote communities

Addresses two significant health service issues:

- Healthcare access
- High turnover of health workers.

### WiWO Model features

- Consistent connection, whether in or out of community
- Regular community visits
- Regular telehealth appointments
- Team dedicated to a LGA

### Impact

- Significantly reduced workforce turnover
- **80% versus 11%**



## Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community Impact so far of ACS - Community Connector Program in Australia

### ACS – CCP sites emerging

Place	Focus	Stage
NSW - Mid Coast LGA	Allied Health Workforce	Community Connector – Sep 23
Victoria - Southern Grampians LGA	Initially Health Workforce	Community Connector – June 23
QLD - Western Downs	Health Workforce	Collaboration established - securing funding
SA – Yorke & Nthn Local Health Network	All workforces	Piloting
New Zealand - Wairarapa Region	Initially Health workforce	Funding secured – strengthening collaboration with Maori



# Settling & Connecting newcomers successfully into the community

Want to learn more about the Community Connector Program?

Visit the [Attract Connect Stay. website](#)

[Attract Connect Stay.](#)

HOME ABOUT TRAINING MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES CONTACT

## Does your rural community struggle to attract and retain health professionals?

We can help.

Chronic health workforce shortages and high turnover of health professionals are a common challenge facing many rural communities.

Successfully recruiting and retaining health professionals is essential to maintaining an adequately sized and skilled health workforce to meet local healthcare needs. We have the solution to help your community do just that!





# Remember

- ❑ The importance of life stage, careers stage and familiarity with place/ rural living on workers' job and personal satisfaction
- ❑ To importance of taking a person-centred approach to RECRUITMENT & RETENTION – job, career and personal factors ALL MATTER in deciding to take a job, & then whether to stay or leave!

Attract  
Connect  
Stay.

Want to work  
with me &  
learn how to  
implement  
the ACS  
Framework ?



**IMPORTANT  
REMINDER!**

**APPLICATIONS  
CLOSING SOON**

Program starts Tuesday  
17th October

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