Attracting trainee teachers to rural and remote NSW schools
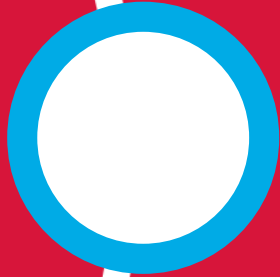
NSW GOVERNMENT

Premier & Cabinet
Behavioural Insights

August 2018

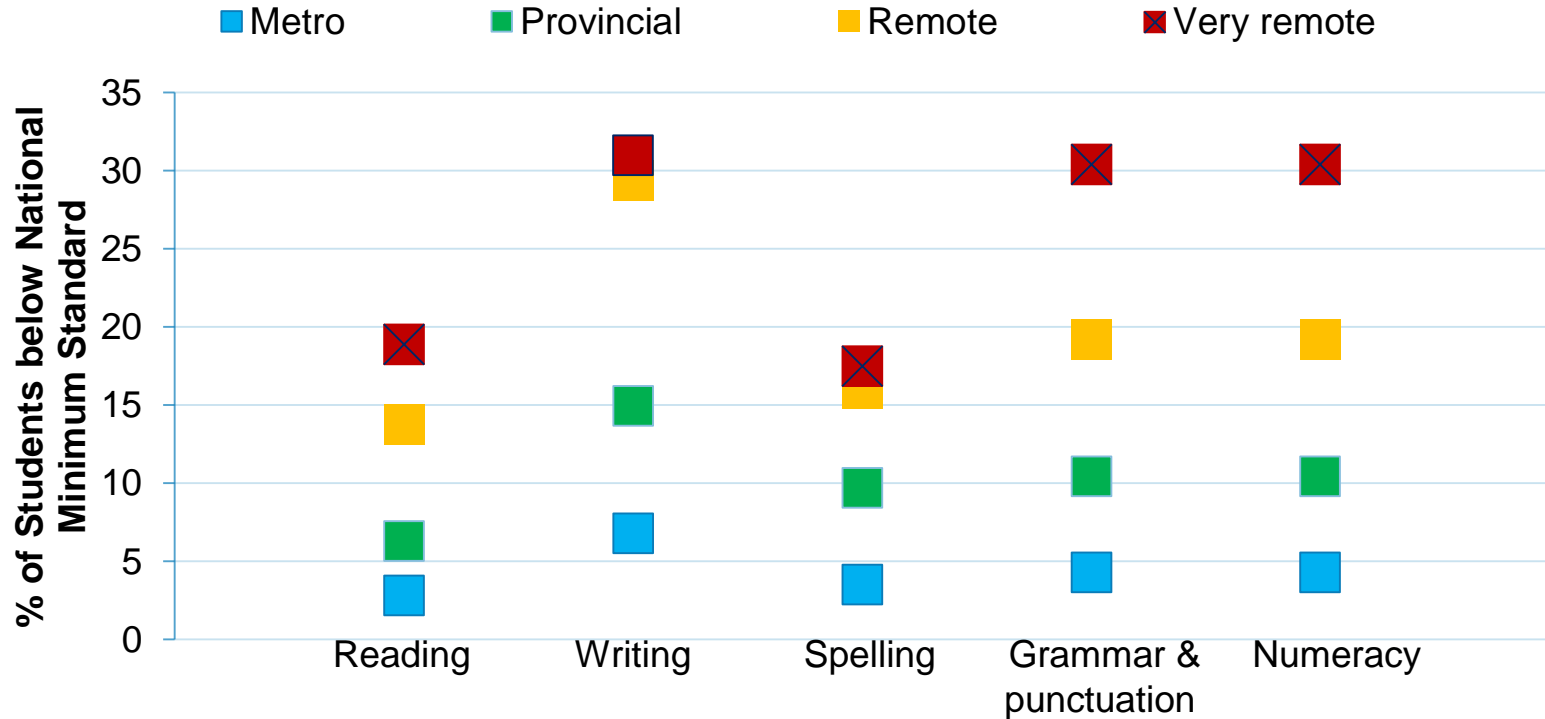The problem

The interventions

What we learned

The problem

Rural and remote students perform worse than metro students on some basic indicators

Legend: ■ Metro ■ Provincial ■ Remote ⊠ Very remote

Y-axis: % of Students below National Minimum Standard (0 to 35)

X-axis categories: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & punctuation, Numeracy

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

NOVEMBER 2013

NSW GOVERNMENT | Education & Communities

Rural and Remote Education
A blueprint for action

RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION – A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION   WWW.DEC.NSW.GOV.AU

Why do very few trainee teachers do their practicums in rural/remote NSW?

Barriers and triggers

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

Easy: research & forms
Attractive: salience
Timely: reminders

We removed the friction cost of opening mail, and encouraged conversation with other members of the household

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA

The behaviourally informed communications (email, postcard and text) tripled the rural/remote applications

Proportion of students submitting an application

x3

12.60%*
(15 students)

4.24%
(5 students)

Control

Treatment
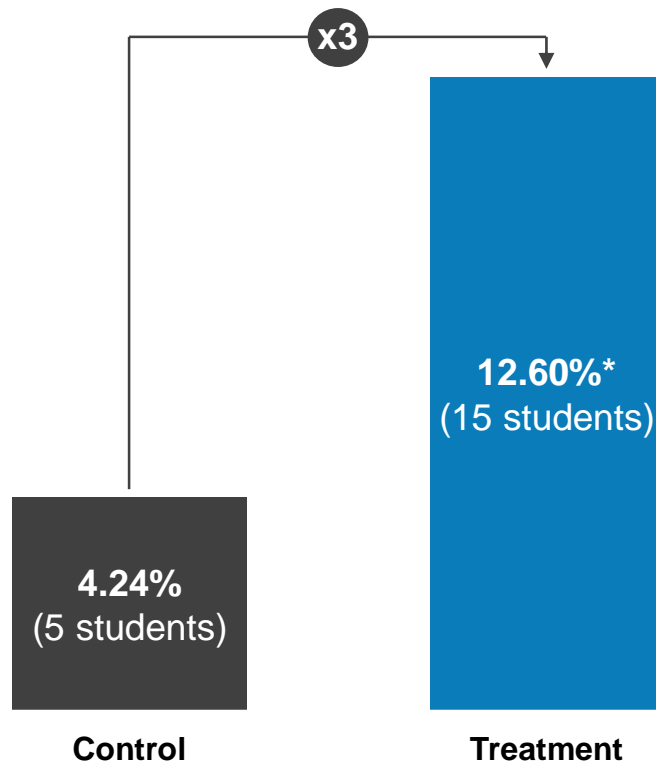
n = 237, p = 0.0269
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

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

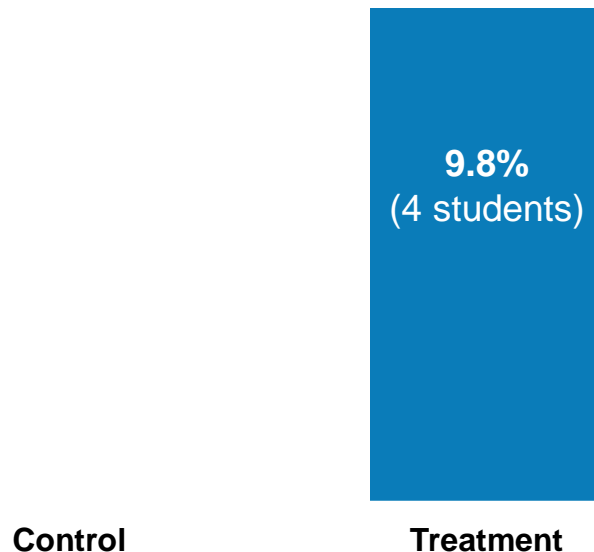# A video testimonial used an influential messenger to encourage applications

Proportion of students submitting an application

The video testimonial, group opportunity and reduced research, led to a directional, non-significant, increase in applications

9.8%
(4 students)

Control   Treatment

n = 81, p = 0.116

We ran three trials making rural/remote placements easier, attractive, social and timely


|				
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA	Easy: research & forms Attractive: salience Timely: reminders			
MACQUARIE University	Easy: research Attractive: testimonial Social: group placement			
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY	Easy: research Attractive: halve costs Social: nominate peers Timely: reminders			

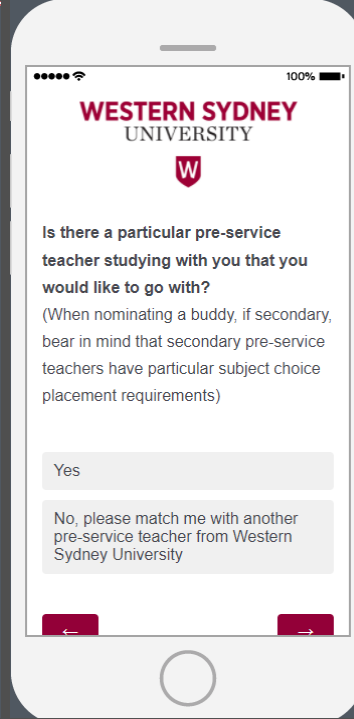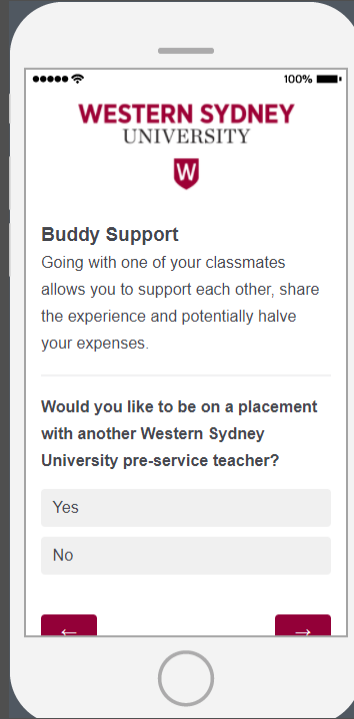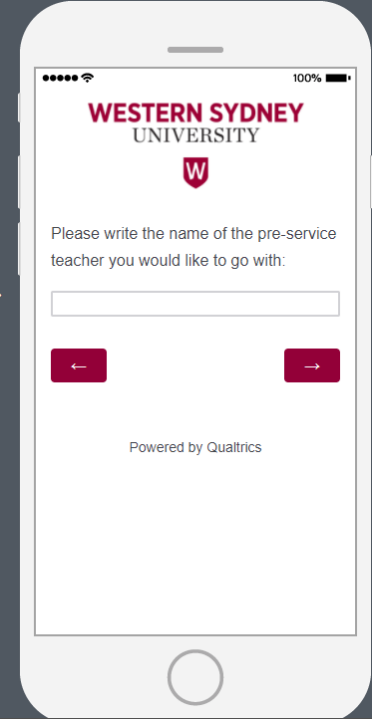# The text reminder was timely: sent three days prior to the application deadline

Control

Treatment

22
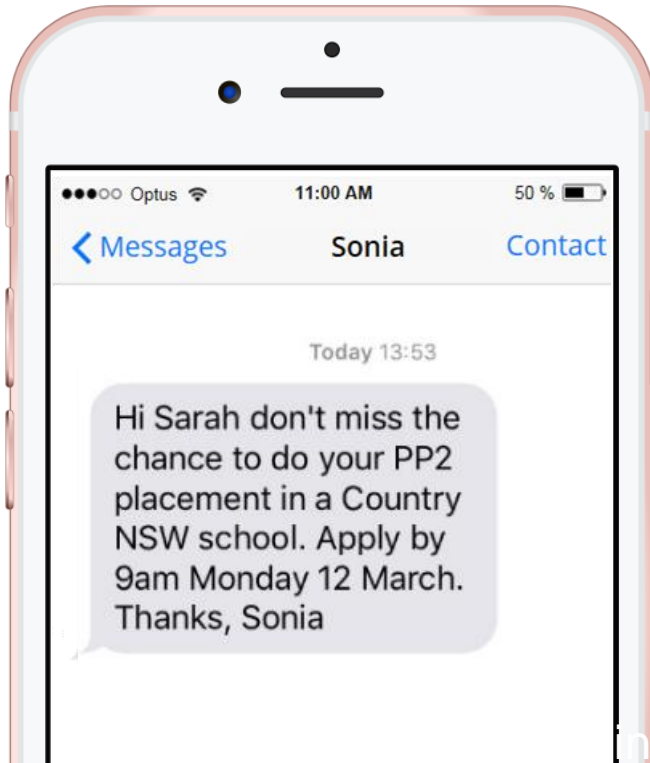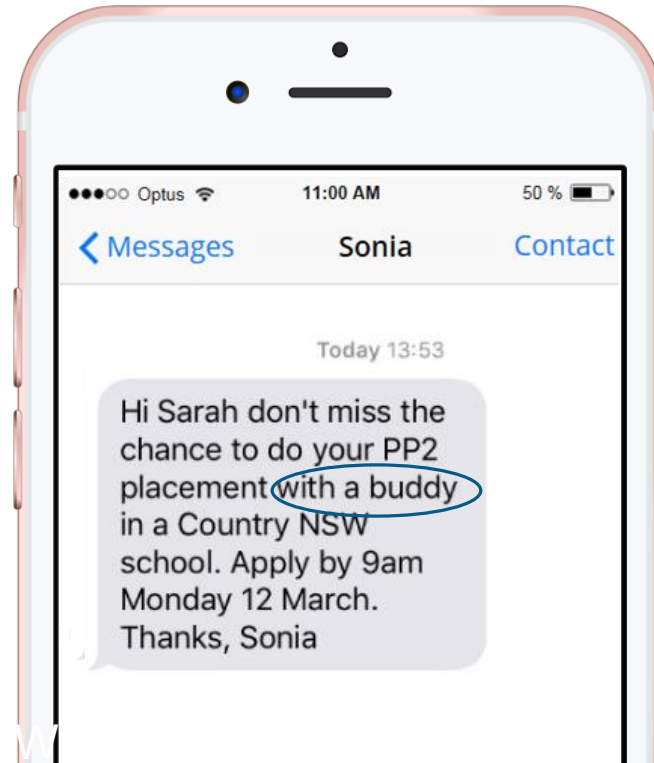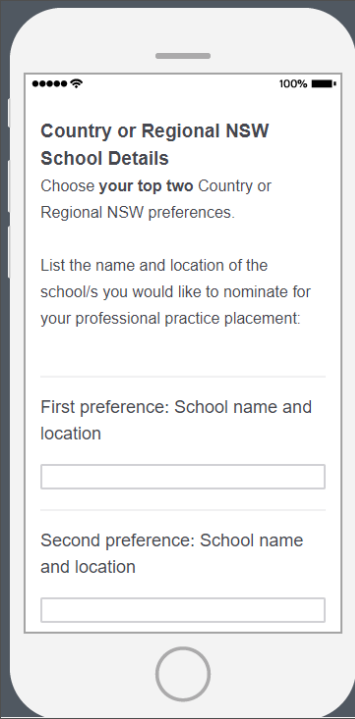
Control

Treatment

The application form made choosing a peer easy by offering a default where WSU would find a match.

BIU in NSW

16

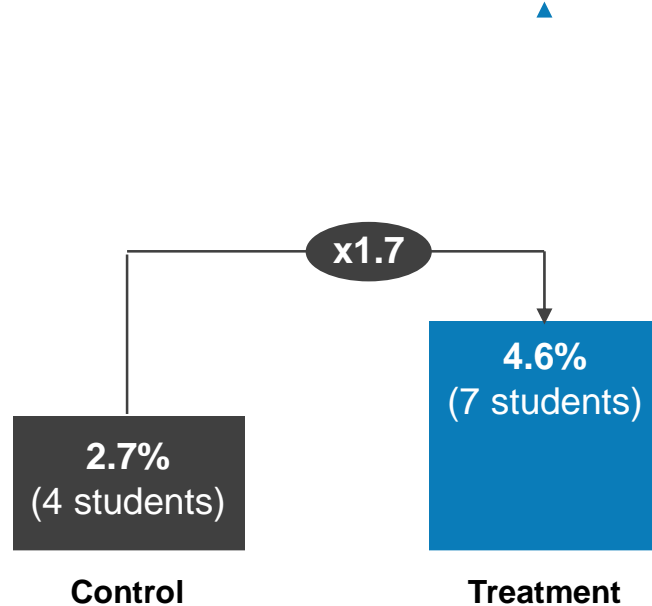**Proportion of students submitting an application**

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….)

x1.7

4.6%
(7 students)

2.7%
(4 students)

Control

Treatment

n = 302, p = 0.374
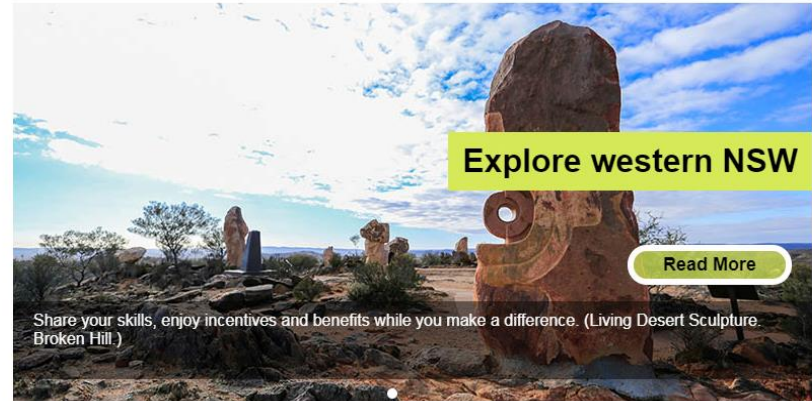* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

What have we learnt?

BIU in NSW

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**

Choose rural

Explore western NSW

Read More

Share your skills, enjoy incentives and benefits while you make a difference. (Living Desert Sculpture, Broken Hill.)

? Questions