

14 December, 2016

Medical Deans Welcomes Government Commitment on Medical Workforce Needs in Regional and Rural Australia

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand today welcomed the Australian Government's commitment to addressing the maldistribution of medical professionals across regional and rural Australia, announced by Assistant Minister Gillespie.

Professor Nicholas Glasgow, Medical Dean's President said the lack of medical services is having an impact on the health of regional and rural Australians and agreed the priority for medical workforce training is specialist training opportunities in regional and rural Australia.

"Medical Dean's have long advocated for a flipped model of joined up, regionally-based specialist training with a city rotation to provide greater opportunities for young doctors to undertake their specialist training in regional and rural locations and remain in these locations."

The Government has also indicated they will undertake an assessment of the number and distribution of medical school places and medical schools in Australia and Medical Dean's looks forward to contributing to this assessment.

In 2015 the number of domestic medical school graduates in Australia was 3055. The number of domestic students commencing medical school in 2016 was 3215. More than 28% of commencing domestic medical students have a rural background.

Professor Glasgow said

"The establishment of rural clinical schools has greatly expanded the number of medical students experiencing a rural clinical placement. Students who undertake a rural placement report high levels of satisfaction and the most recent data from a survey of final year medical students indicate 36.5% have a preference for practicing outside a capital city.

The rollout of the Regional Training Hubs in 2017 will further assist in retaining medical graduates in regional areas.

The real challenge in meeting the medical workforce needs of rural and regional Australia is to ensure the increase in medical graduates translates into doctors in the specialties and locations they are most needed and Medical Deans looks forward to working with the Government to achieve this."

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