

Media Release

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Specialist Training Needed to Keep Young Doctors in the Bush

Medical Deans, the peak body for entry level medical education, again calls for the Federal Government to invest in viable, regional post graduate training programs to address rural medical workforce shortages.

Medical Deans President, Professor Nicholas Glasgow said he was pleased to see Minister Ley's comments in the Bendigo Advertiser which showed the Government understood that simply increasing the number of medical school training places will not provide regional and rural Australia with the medical workforce they need.

Bendigo Advertiser 20 May 2016

Health Minister Sussan Ley said the government had been advised against creating any more medical training places.

"We will go on talking about it, but at the moment my experts and the Australian Medical Association are telling me we don't need any new medical training places in Australia," she said.

She said the number of student undergraduate medical training places doubled between 2008 and 2016.

Professor Glasgow said "More post graduate training opportunities are needed so medical graduates can stay in rural areas for their specialist training. We have more than doubled the output of our medical schools over the last 15 years and there are now significant numbers of medical students and interns in rural and regional areas.

However the path to becoming a fully fledged doctor is a long one and many young doctors end up back in our cities in order to complete their specialist training."

Professor Glasgow said that scarce resources needed to be allocated across the training pipeline where they could make the most difference. He noted that the proposed University of Newcastle Central Coast medical school involved a transfer of Commonwealth supported places from the University of Newcastle campus.

"The growth of rural clinical schools means medical students can experience high quality rural placements. They have been successful in increasing the number of medical students with a rural background - since 2003 the number of medical students from a rural background has increased from 20% of commencing students to nearly 26 % in 2015. It is now time to address the next disconnect in the rural training system by enabling graduates interested in rural medical careers to stay in rural areas while they finish their training"

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