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Investment in rural training welcomed

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand (Medical Deans) has welcomed the Opposition's commitment to fund 200 additional medical school places to strengthen the medical workforce in rural, regional, and remote Australia.

"Medical Deans is very pleased to see the Opposition commit to expanding medical teaching and training in rural areas as part of its broader strategy to improve healthcare access outside metropolitan centres," said Professor Michelle Leech, President of Medical Deans.

In addition to the new places, the Opposition has pledged \$100 million to upgrade infrastructure at existing rural training sites, where the additional students will be based. "This investment in training infrastructure is essential to ensure high-quality medical education is delivered in regional and rural Australia," Professor Leech said.

This announcement brings the Opposition's total commitment to 350 new medical school places—building on its earlier pledge to match the Government's rural GP training initiative of 100 places, rising to 150.

Professor Leech also highlighted the importance of ensuring rural GPs are supported to teach the next generation of doctors: "We know that rural medical education depends on our experienced rural GPs and rural generalists, who supervise students during their clinical placements. If we want to expand these training opportunities, it is vital that incentive payments for teaching are fit for purpose."

She added that medical school is just the first step in addressing workforce shortages: "Increasing rural placements at the medical school level must be matched by opportunities for junior doctors and specialists to train and work in rural and regional areas after graduation."

In its 2025 Pre-Budget Submission, Medical Deans called for 1,000 additional medical school places to be introduced over four years via a competitive tender process. Places would be awarded to existing medical schools able to demonstrate a track record—and a clear strategy—for graduating doctors more likely to choose rural practice or General Practice.

The submission also called for an immediate increase in the GP teaching incentive payment, as a precursor to a comprehensive review of the broader teaching incentives program.

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Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand Inc. represents and supports the 24 medical schools across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand in their cutting-edge medical education, work-integrated training, and research to recruit, develop and nurture outstanding medical graduates to enable our communities to continue to access world-class health services.

Medical Deans [annual survey of medical graduates](https://medicaldeans.org.au/) provides valuable information and insights on the make-up of our future doctors, including demographics, education, experience, and future career preferences.

<https://medicaldeans.org.au/>