

VICTORIAN RURAL GENERALIST PROGRAM

Barwon South West Regional Network Committee

15 November 2023

Attention: Executive Officer – Medical
AHPRA
GPO Box 9958
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Re: Consultation on the Recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine

Dear Sir/Madam

This is to express our support for the joint-application to have Rural Generalist Medicine recognised as a specialist field within General Practice.

There is an urgent need to improve access to care for people living in rural and remote areas including in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We believe that a strong Rural Generalist workforce can make a significant contribution to improving these peoples' access to high quality care and through this to bringing their health status closer to parity with that of Australians living in cities.

Rural Generalists are comprehensively trained to provide as much care close to home as they safely can, to meet the needs of the patients that they serve in rural and remote areas. People in these areas have less access to every kind of medical and allied health specialist than their counterparts in cities and receive far fewer services.

The people most likely to rely on the local care that can be provided through the broad scope of services of a Rural Generalist, are the people in these communities with the most disadvantage who cannot afford or have considerable difficulty in traveling to cities for care.

National recognition of the training and professional standards of care that these doctors provide will give confidence to rural communities in the care they receive. It will also provide the current Rural Generalist workforce with the status commensurate with their actual training and scope, and which will advance an aspirational rural career path for future generations of doctors.

We expect that national specialist recognition will also enable structural change by enabling credentialing, employment, and workforce planning to fully incorporate these doctors and to build resources and models of care around their full scope of service.

Rural Generalists do not work in isolation but are a critical part of the local healthcare team, all members of which are of utmost importance to rural and remote communities. Recognition will however maximise the contribution these doctors are able to make within their local teams for their local communities. We expect it will also contribute to a stronger national network of doctors to service rural and remote communities into the future.

Our committee represents all of the Health Services in the Barwon South West Region of Victoria. We have been actively supporting the Victorian Rural Generalist Program and growing Rural Generalists in our region. We believe that recognition of Rural Generalism as its' own specialty is vitally important to the future of healthcare & fully endorse this submission.

Yours sincerely



Ms Anna Dyson

Barwon South West Regional Coordinator
VRGP - Barwon South West Regional Network Committee