

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Infrastructure funding provides concrete support for rural practices

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has welcomed further funding of rural medical practice infrastructure by the Federal Government through the latest round of the Primary Care Infrastructure Grants program.

The program provides grants to assist rural and urban practices to increase consulting rooms, expand treatment areas, provide additional space for allied health services, and make more space within the practices to train medical students and young doctors.

The Government has announced that, through this second round, about \$21 million in grants has been shortlisted for general practices in regional and rural Australia.

“One of the biggest challenges in rural practice is affording the expansion of the infrastructure itself to accommodate enough doctors, nurses and other health professionals” RDAA President, Dr Paul Mara, said.

“The cost of developing additional practice infrastructure is significant, and as a result many rural practices remain restricted in the range of services they can provide, in part because they can’t afford to expand their practice space.

“Given this dilemma, these grants are extremely important to the rural practices that receive them.

“They are also a great investment in the future rural doctor workforce, given expanded infrastructure can make it easier for rural practices to train additional medical students and young doctors. An even better return on this investment would be possible if rural doctors were better compensated for the time spent training and overseeing these young medicos, as some doctors would then be able to take on additional trainees.

“Of course, these grants only help address the bricks and mortar aspect of rural practice—there continues to be an urgent need for additional measures to entice more doctors, nurses and other health professionals to the bush, and RDAA remains keen to work with the Government and other stakeholders to progress these issues.”

Shortlisted applicants under the Primary Care Infrastructure Grants program will now begin negotiations with the Australian Department of Health and Ageing before individual grants are finalised. A full list of shortlisted applicants can be found at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pacd-gpsuperclinics-pcigg2010](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pacd-gpsuperclinics-pcigg2010).

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