

MEDIA RELEASE



Tuesday 22 March 2011

MEDIA ALERT

Rural doctors to hold national breakfast briefing for federal politicians tomorrow

**Parliament House, Canberra
Wednesday, 23 March 2011**

(Media—please refer to ‘notes to media’ at end of release)

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) will hold a national breakfast briefing for federal politicians at Parliament House in Canberra tomorrow (Wednesday 23 March 2011).

This is the second such briefing to be held by RDAA—its inaugural briefing was held at Parliament House in March last year.

Around 20 rural doctors from across Australia will be at this year’s briefing to discuss directly with federal politicians the key challenges facing rural doctors and their patients.

The briefing comes at a time of:

- Strong national focus on health reform as a result of the Federal Government’s health reform agenda
- Growing recognition (including by the Federal Government) of the inequities faced by country Australians in accessing local healthcare—most notably due to the continuing shortage of doctors and other health professionals in the bush, and the downgrading of hospitals and health services in rural and remote communities
- New opportunities for a brighter future for rural healthcare with the increased power of the country independents within the Federal Government, and with the graduation of more medical students from Australia’s universities (assuming enhanced measures are put in place to better entice young medical graduates to rural practice)
- Growing recognition that initiatives such as a National Advanced Rural Training Pathway are required to deliver more doctors to rural and remote Australia with the advanced skills necessary to practise competently and confidently in these more isolated settings

Politicians attending Wednesday’s breakfast will hear presentations from:

- **Dr Paul Mara**, RDAA President and a rural doctor in Gundagai
- **Dr Jenny May**, Chair of RDAA’s Female Doctors Group and a rural doctor and GP academic in Tamworth, on why rural medicine makes for such a great career choice

- **Professor John Humphreys** from Monash University, on outcomes to-date from the *Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life* (MABEL) study—the Australian Longitudinal Survey of Doctors
- **Dr Dan Halliday** (President of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland and a rural generalist doctor in Stanthorpe) and **Dr Rosie Zacher** (a rural generalist doctor from Toowoomba) on the success of Queensland's Rural Generalist Pathway in getting more rural generalist trainees into country towns across Queensland, and the need for a National Advanced Rural Training Pathway to build on this success across Australia

RDAA's national breakfast briefing will be followed by a meeting of RDAA's Female Doctors Group, also at Parliament House.

Notes to media:

- **Interviews about RDAA's national breakfast briefing** will be available with RDAA President, Dr Paul Mara, today (in Canberra) and after the breakfast concludes at 8.40am Wednesday (at Parliament House).
 - **Interviews about the Female Doctors Group meeting** are available with Dr Jenny May today (via phone) and after 1.30pm Wednesday (at Parliament House).
 - **Media interested in attending the breakfast briefing for vision or photos should contact Patrick Daley to discuss options.** The Female Doctors Group meeting is closed to media.
-

Media contact: Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890 (Monday to Wednesday)
Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638 (Thursday and Friday)