



Rural Doctors Association
of Queensland
“Caring for the Country”

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“Flood Recovery” highlight of rural doctors meeting

Doctors affected by the recent floods will have a chance to debrief with colleagues, President of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, Dr Dan Halliday announced today.

“RDAQ’s 22nd annual conference is in Cairns this weekend and while it’s always a good opportunity for our members to compare notes, there’s a special reason this year,” he said.

“So many of our members have been directly affected by natural disasters recently, especially by flooding,” said conference convenor Dr Konrad Kangru. “Some of our members have had more than one high-tide mark to deal with.”

RDAQ is hosting a special “breakfast debrief” for flood-affected members at their conference on Saturday 11th June. Featuring legendary Theodore husband-and-wife team, the indomitable Associate Professor Bruce Chater and his wife and practice manager Ann Chater, the event will allow affected doctors to trade stories, share advice, and realise they are not alone.

“Rural communities are resilient,” said Dr Chater, who was already planning his practice’s comeback while being evacuated by chopper. “They’re knocked down by drought, fire, storm and flood and somehow always seem to bounce back up again. It’s in their nature but they don’t do it on their own.”

“Rural communities do recover from natural disasters but always need practical help with reconstruction of facilities, including health facilities. A country town can be strong as you like but there’s always a need for materials and resources and manpower and that sort of practical help to get back in business.

Bruce and Ann’s home was flooded as well as the surgery; sharing their story through an online blog helped them cope and helped others with their own tips, advice and inspiration.

“Local doctors always have a key role in supporting their communities during and after disasters,” Dr Chater said. “Not just in straightforward health care matters but in psychological support, encouragement and leadership. It can be a pretty big role to fill and it takes its toll.

“That’s why our organisations like RDAQ are so important in providing collegiate support,” Dr Chater said. “We gain strength from supportive colleagues and for that reason, this debriefing session will make an important contribution to Queensland’s flood recovery.

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