



Rural Doctors Association of Victoria
Media release
Wednesday 4 May 2011

Rural doctors welcome Victorian Government's rural generalist training initiative

The Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV) has welcomed the Victorian Government's budget announcement to establish a dedicated training program for Rural Generalist Practitioners in the state.

The Victorian Minister for Health, David Davis, has confirmed that \$2.4 million over four years will be provided to underpin the program, commencing from the 2011-12 financial year.

"This is an incredibly important initiative for the survival of Victoria's rural hospitals and the delivery of health services to rural Victorians" said RDAV President, Dr Mike Moynihan, who practises as a Rural Generalist Obstetrician in Swan Hill.

"Anyone living in rural Victoria knows the immense trouble our hospitals are having in maintaining acute services—emergency, theatre and obstetrics. You need only consider the 90 or so rural maternity units that have been closed across Victoria since 1983.

"The shortage of Rural Generalist Practitioners is now also affecting large hospitals like ours in Swan Hill.

"Victoria has simply got to train Rural Generalist Practitioners who are able to step up to the mark and do this kind of work, in addition to their general practice work.

"Consequently, it is wonderful to see the new Victorian Government supporting the establishment of a dedicated program to train these doctors in its first budget since being elected.

"Yesterday's press statement by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) questioning the merits of rural generalist training is most unfortunate. Obviously the RACGP doesn't understand the dire position that Victorian rural healthcare is in and the critical need to train and attract Rural Generalist Practitioners to keep rural hospital services going.

"RDAV has watched the success over a number of years of a rural generalist training pathway in Queensland, and advocated strongly for a dedicated rural generalist training program in Victoria that is modelled on the training approach already implemented up there...it is great to see that this is now coming to fruition in our own state.

"As it will be a tight squeeze to start producing Rural Generalist Practitioners from this year's medical graduates and have them mentored into fully active practice by Victoria's remaining older and retiring practitioners, there is much work required now to get the program up and running as quickly as possible. While the proposed budget is possibly about 60% of our estimated requirements, when coupled with the \$1.6 million per year that is already allocated for procedural training places it is certainly a good start.

"RDAV looks forward to working with the Victorian Government to implement this exciting initiative."

For interviews contact: Dr Mike Moynihan, RDAV President, on 0427 331 370.