

MEDIA RELEASE



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Rural doctors work to stamp out violence against country professionals

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is working to stamp out violence in rural workplaces by helping develop a 'working safe' framework to assist health and other professionals based in rural communities.

Development of the framework is being funded by the Australian Government, and follows a *Working safe in rural and remote Australia* roundtable convened by RDAA and other organisations in 2009.

Dr Jenny May, Chair of RDAA's Female Doctors Group and a primary supporter of the project, said RDAA was pleased the Government had awarded funding to get the project underway.

"The *Working safe in rural and remote Australia* roundtable was a collaboration between RDAA, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, Australian Nursing Federation, Police Federation of Australia, Queensland Teacher's Union and Council of Remote Area Nurses Australia Plus," Dr May said.

"This is an issue close to my heart as many health professionals—particularly female doctors and nurses—working in rural and remote areas are vulnerable to violence in the workplace.

"We are often working on our own, rarely have access to support services and commonly work on an outreach basis within an isolated setting.

"Violence against any professional impacts not just on the health and wellbeing of that professional, but also on their employees, employers, colleagues, visiting professionals and the whole of the community.

"It is critical that rural professionals have access to the right information and tools to ensure their workplaces are as safe from violence as they possibly can be."

The first part of the project is aimed at increasing the understanding of current initiatives and strategies and their effectiveness, as well as developing a national framework for whole-of-community responses to working safely.

"As you can see from the roundtable group, there are many sectors affected by violence in rural communities, and violence at work is something that affects both the workforce and public health in general" Dr May said.

"It is terrific that the Australian Government has recognised the importance of this issue and funded the first stage of the framework's development, with the ultimate aim of establishing a working safe training program to assist a whole range of rural professionals. We look forward to getting the project underway in earnest."

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