

Saturday 21 October 2023

## Future doctor recognised for efforts to empower disadvantaged high schoolers to study Medicine

A final year medical student from Wagga Wagga in NSW has received the Rural Doctor's Association of Australia's (RDAA) Medical Student of the Year Award for 2023 in recognition of her strong commitment to Rural Medicine, and her efforts in empowering disadvantaged rural high school students to consider careers as doctors and other health professionals.

**Kate Hurst** was presented with the Award at the Rural Medicine Australia (RMA23) conference dinner in Hobart on Friday night.

"After completing her Bachelor of Pre-Medicine, Science and Health with Distinction at the University of Wollongong, Kate moved back to her home town of Wagga Wagga to study Medicine at the University of Notre Dame's regional campus there" **RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.**

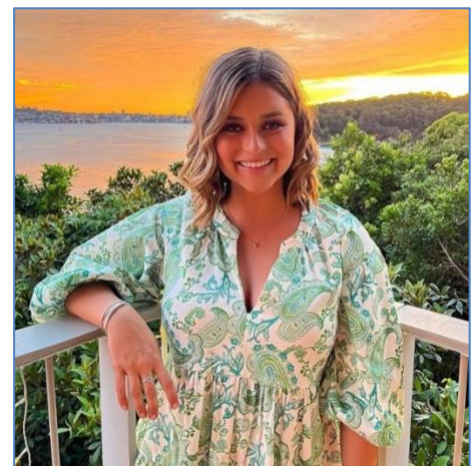
"She is a great example of someone who has benefitted from rural medical training opportunities being provided by universities, giving local students the opportunity to study in their home town where they have good support networks, know their community well, and are involved in the community.

"Having witnessed the challenges that rural high school students face when considering studying Medicine or other healthcare degrees – including getting the right information about study options and having the self-confidence that they can succeed – Kate decided to help.

"She established an initiative called Rural Medicine Pathways that this year saw Aboriginal, refugee and disadvantaged students from more than 31 high schools in rural NSW attend a day-long event in Wagga – to talk about health issues, lifestyle choices, and pathways into health careers.

"The students were then enrolled in an individualised mentoring program with local medical students to help build their connections and self-confidence when applying for careers in healthcare.

"An additional information session was also held for families and friends to recognise the students' achievements and to enable parents and others to ask questions about study pathways into health careers.



“That is only one element of what Kate has been doing though.

“She has also been active in ensuring the wellbeing of medical students and junior doctors through a range of projects, and volunteers with organisations including the Wagga Wagga Red Cross, the Riverina Cancer Care Centre, and a local complex disability support service.

“She is spending her final year elective in the small Riverina town of Finley, and has been offered an internship at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in 2024.

“Ultimately, she plans to become a rural-based Orthopaedic Surgeon.

“We warmly congratulate Kate on receiving this much-deserved Award.”

**Kate said:** “It is an incredible honour and great surprise to receive such a prestigious award from RDAA and I would like to thank everyone involved. I have always been extremely passionate about pursuing Rural Medicine and I can’t wait to start my career in Wagga next year. I hope to keep working with rural communities, schools and RDAA in the years to come to continue to close the gap for rural healthcare at the ground level. Being a doctor is one thing but being a rural doctor is truly something special and I feel so privileged to be fulfilling that dream.”

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**Kate Hurst is available for interview.**

**A photo of Kate is available by [clicking here](#).**

**A photo of Kate at the Awards night (holding her Award certificate) is available on request.**

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