

**23 August 2013**

## Coalition looks to the future of General Practice

Rural doctors have welcomed the Coalition's focus on general practice and front-line health care in its health policy platform announced this week.

Dr Sheilagh Cronin, President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), said she was pleased to see that the Coalition's health policy included a number of strategies from RDAA's election platform.

"The Coalition have recognised the importance of general practice, and have included measures to keep rural practices viable as well as securing a pipeline of future rural doctors in their health policy," Dr Cronin said.

"General Practitioners are the backbone of our healthcare system, and it is good to see the Coalition acknowledging the importance of supporting a strong primary care workforce.

"This is particularly crucial in the bush, where access to health care is often an issue, and where patients rely on their local general practice to provide and coordinate a wide range of services."

Dr Cronin also welcomed the Coalition's commitment to improving the capacity to teach and train the increasing number of medical graduates that are about to hit the workforce.

"The commitments to double the incentive payments made to doctors for teaching, retain the existing rural loadings on these payments, and provide additional funding to assist rural and remote practices to build teaching infrastructure, will support rural doctors who are already teaching and encourage others to do so," Dr Cronin said.

The RDAA also congratulated the Coalition on recognising and addressing some of the other key issues that impact on rural general practices.

"I am sure that the commitment to review red tape and regulations to reduce the administrative burden on general practice will be welcomed by all rural doctors," Dr Cronin said.

"Streamlining administrative requirements would free up more time and resources for patient consultations and for teaching.

"We also welcome Coalition support for a review of the flawed ASGC-RA classification system. The anomalies in this system have resulted in the inefficient use of resources and in incentives not being directed to where they are most needed.

"RDAA has always championed the cause of the General Practitioner," Dr Cronin said.

"Governments often focus on big ticket items such as hospitals, and while these are important, it is the GPs of Australia who provide the essential day-to-day frontline health care, especially in rural areas.



# MEDIA RELEASE

“While there are still further initiatives that we believe could be implemented, with little cost, to help secure the future health care for many rural communities, the Coalition policy demonstrates their understanding of the crucial nature of primary health care, and their willingness to listen to the requests of those ‘on the ground’, delivering these services.”

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**Available for interview:** RDAA CEO Jenny Johnson on 0429 931 120

**Alternative media contacts:** Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890 (Monday to Wednesday)  
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