

26 July 2013

Rural Doctors welcome Coalition support to scrap education tax

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has welcomed the news that the Coalition has joined the ranks of those calling for the Labor Government to scrap the proposed cap on self funded work related education expenses.

After a meeting today with a Scrap the Cap Alliance delegation, Christopher Pyne, Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training, on behalf of the Coalition, added their support in calling for an end to this tax on learning.

Dr Sheilagh Cronin, President of RDAA, said that the proposed \$2,000 limit on tax deduction for work related self-funded education expenses would be disastrous for rural health.

“Rural doctors, especially those with advanced skills training in areas such as obstetrics, emergency medicine, surgery and anesthetics, must maintain a high level of ongoing professional training,” Dr Cronin said.

“This is essential for both the standard of patient care, ensuring these doctors are up-to-date with the latest developments in their field, as well as required for them to maintain their skills to provide these services in a hospital setting.

“These types of courses are usually only available in the major cities and the fees for the training alone will often exceed the \$2,000 cap.

“Add onto this the cost of travel and accommodation, unpaid time away from their community and practice, and often the services of expensive locums to cover them while they are away and you can see this tax may have a major effect on the ability of these doctors to attend these courses.

“We are already struggling to find enough doctors with the required skill-set to work in rural areas. Adding another disincentive like this can only have a negative impact on the health care available to rural Australians.” Dr Cronin said.

“The Greens have called for a Senate Inquiry into the proposed tax, and we welcome their support on this issue as well.”

RDAA is one of more than 60 organisations who have joined the Scrap the Tax Alliance, that now represents more than 1.6 million professionals, including doctors, universities, nurses, engineers, accountants, lawyers, veterinarians, allied health professionals, and small business operators.

For more information on the Scrap the Cap Alliance and campaign go to <http://www.scrapthecap.com.au/>



MEDIA RELEASE

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

Alternative media contacts: Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890 (Monday to Wednesday)
Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638 (Thursday and Friday)