

Media Statement

Rural Doctors Association of Australia President, Dr Ewen McPhee

3 February 2017

Critical care: International doctors crucial to rural Australia

Australia has one of the most affordable, accessible and comprehensive healthcare systems in the world, with a goal of equitable access to health care for all people.

With our vast landmass and range of communities, achieving this goal of equitable access has always been a challenge, part of which is the recruitment and retention of doctors in rural and remote areas – of which we have many.

For the people in these communities to receive timely and local access to health services, we rely on a workforce that has a large number of doctors who have trained overseas.

These Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs) come from all over the world. Some are from affluent first world countries, such as England or Ireland. Others come from countries that are less wealthy, or have different cultural values to Australia, such as Bangladesh, Iran, or the Philippines.

Regardless of their background, they provide an invaluable service to many of us who live in rural and remote areas. The reality is that if we did not have these OTDs, there would be numerous towns and communities across Australia suffering without a local medical service.

With the far-flung nature of our country, there are many cases where having to travel to see a doctor would require either hours in a car or ambulance, or a plane evacuation for more urgent medical attention.

Australia is a country built upon an immigrant population, and we have developed a culture of acceptance and inclusion for those who come to our shores.

I know first-hand of the many communities that value your work and appreciate your dedication to their health and well being, as well your contribution to the vibrancy that cultural diversity brings to our lives.

On behalf of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) I extend my thanks to all the Overseas Trained Doctors who serve rural and remote communities and develop a place within them.





**RURAL DOCTORS
ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

MEDIA RELEASE

RDAA is currently establishing a special interest group for OTDs to provide the opportunity for input into key issues impacting on them, and to guide RDAA support and advocacy on issues such as access to training, education and support and Medicare policy such as 19AB exemptions.

We invite all OTDs to join their State RDA and get involved.

[Click here for a high-resolution photo of Dr Ewen McPhee.](#)

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