



Attention: Melbourne / health / regional media

Media alert: Rural doctor national press conference – Friday 30 October, 1pm ADST, Melbourne

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) will hold a national press conference today (Friday), following a critical forum of rural doctors from across Australia. Issues to be discussed include threats to the future of the rural doctor workforce, and future healthcare and hospital care, in both rural Victoria and across rural and remote Australia.

The forum is part of RDAA and ACRRM's national *Rural Medicine Australia 2009* conference, which is being held in Melbourne until Sunday.

Today's forum will consider:

- the worsening shortage of doctors across both Victoria and rural and remote Australia—and the continuing urgent need for a Rural Rescue Package to get and keep more of them in the bush
- what reforms recommended under the Federal Government's national health reform agenda will work in rural and remote Australia, what reforms won't work, and what additional reforms are required
- the critical need for governments to fully reflect in any national health reforms the unique needs of rural health professionals and rural patients
- the continuing closure and downgrading of rural hospitals across Australia, including much-needed maternity units, emergency departments and other services
- other action the federal and state governments must urgently take to entice and retain more doctors and health professionals in the bush, keep rural hospitals and health services open, and ensure rural and remote Australians have better access to local healthcare.

Rural Medicine Australia 2009 is being attended by nearly 300 rural doctors, medical students and others.

What, when and where:

The press conference will be held at 1pm ADST Friday 30 October, following the forum's conclusion (note that the forum itself is closed to media). Interviews will also be available on-site at the conference and via telephone after the press conference, right through this afternoon, and on Saturday and Sunday.

Location of press conference:

Just outside the Bell Ballroom, Rydges Hotel Bell City, Preston, Melbourne.

Media contact:

Lara Cole on 0421 202 643

Full conference program:

www.acrrm.com.au