

6 February 26

## Rural practice owners take centre stage at national conference

RDAA Rural Practice Owners Conference

7-8 March 2025

Sofitel, Gold Coast



Medical practice owners from across rural and remote Australia will tomorrow [7 March 25] gathering on the Gold Coast for the first day of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia's (RDAA) Rural Practice Owners Conference 2026.

This two-day national event, the first of its kind dedicated specifically to rural and remote practice ownership, brings together practice owners, managers, policymakers, peak bodies and industry leaders to focus on the real-world business of sustaining rural general practice.



**RDAA President Dr Sarah Chalmers** said the strong turnout reflects the growing recognition that rural practice ownership presents unique challenges and unique opportunities.

“Running a rural practice is far more complex than running one in an urban centre.” **Dr Chalmers said.** “Remote practice is another level again.”

“Rural practice owners need to balance their staff commitments not only within the general practice but also to sustain rural hospital services as well. These practice owners not only need ensure they provide a very broad scope of care for their communities, but also manage increasing compliance requirements and navigate financial pressures, often with fewer patients but more services.

“This conference is about equipping rural practice owners with practical strategies, connections and confidence to ensure their practices remain viable and sustainable into the future.”

### The program includes:

- A national plenary examining **contemporary rural practice ownership models**, featuring independent, community-owned and corporate perspectives
- Sessions on **financial planning, Medicare billing in the rural context** and practice accounting
- Dedicated discussions on **HR challenges, IMG recruitment** pathways and workforce sustainability
- A plenary panel exploring the **growing role of artificial intelligence** in rural medical practice
- Direct engagement opportunities with ACRRM, RACGP, government agencies and industry partners

The conference also includes a **Charity Gala Dinner** supporting the work of the **Rural Doctors Foundation**.

Dr Chalmers said the event fills an important national gap.

“Metropolitan practice owners have long had access to tailored business and leadership forums but, until now, rural practice owners have largely been expected to adapt content that doesn’t reflect their reality,” she said.

“This conference is different. It speaks directly to the rural context; the funding models, workforce pressures, and business risks unique to rural and remote Australia.

“There is real power in bringing rural practice owners together in one place and these conversations will help shape the future of rural healthcare delivery.”

**RDAA CEO and Conference Convener Peta Rutherford** said the conference marks an important milestone for the sector.

“Strong, sustainable rural practices are essential to maintaining access to quality healthcare close to home,” **Ms Rutherford said**.

“When we support rural practice owners, we support entire communities.”

The Rural Practice Owners Conference continues on Sunday with further sessions on accreditation, multidisciplinary care models and the future business landscape for rural and remote general practice.

---

#### Further information

[Registrations](#) are open

[Full program details](#)

#### Download:

[Photo of Dr Sarah Chalmers](#)

#### Available for interview:

RDAA President, Dr Sarah Chalmers

RDAA CEO/Conference Convener, Peta Rutherford

#### Media contacts:

Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638

Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890