

14 January 2025

Annual junior doctor rural migration is underway

Early January marks the start of the 'go bush' period for a new cohort of junior doctors, as hundreds of trainees across Australia head in to rural towns for their rural clinical placement.

"A good experience in rural can make or break a rural medical career," Dr RT Lewandowski, President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), said.

"These placements can be for as little as five weeks up to the full year, and for many it will be their first experience of living outside of a major city.

"Rural medicine provides varied, interesting and rewarding careers, whether that be in a general practice or at a rural hospital.

"Rural General Practice (GP) and Rural Generalist (RG) practice are one of the few speciality areas that provide true breadth and the ability to adapt your professional interests over the course of your working life.

"Both provide the opportunity to care for patients from 'cradle to grave', as well as being able to focus on areas of special interest along the way."

Rural GPs provide care in the community across all aspects of a patient's health and wellbeing. Rural Generalists provide emergency and other areas of advanced skill, either in or outside of the hospital setting, alongside general practice care. These advanced skill areas are as varied as mental health, obstetrics, gastroenterology, surgery, Aboriginal health, anaesthetics... the list goes on.

"Instead of dealing with a specific problem area, as many other areas of specialist medicine do, GP and RG work offers the chance to make a real difference to a patient's quality of life across multiple facets," Dr Lewandowski said.

"GPs and RGs training in a rural area get a huge amount of hands-on experience as they form an integral part of the rural health team from the day they arrive.

"Over the next few weeks across the country rural and remote communities will welcome new interns, and junior doctors who are yet to finalise their future training pathway, with the GP and Registrar cohort who have chosen a rural training program commencing soon after.

"There is an increasing interest in rural medicine not just with the two GP colleges RACGP and ACRRM, but also across other medical specialties, such as psychiatry and paediatrics, which is very exciting.



“We hope that all of the junior doctors heading bush really embrace the experience, get to know their patients, their communities, and the joys and opportunities available in rural medicine.

“Having a positive experience during their rural placement is the most likely way to recruit these doctors back into rural medicine when their training is completed, so we encourage their rural colleagues and other members of the community to make them feel a part of everything their area has to offer and show them a great time.

“Coming in to a community and into an unfamiliar rural environment can be very intimidating, so anything you can do to welcome and engage these new docs’ would be greatly appreciated,” Dr Lewandowski said.

A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).

Available for interview:

RDAAC President, Dr RT Lewandowski

RDAAC CEO, Ms Peta Rutherford

Media contact:

Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638