



Stronger Rural Health – Training – streamlining general practice training to produce Australian trained general practitioners where they are needed

The Government will streamline existing general practice training and qualification arrangements and, through increasing vocational recognition (VR) rates, improve the qualifications of the general practice workforce.

The Government will rationalise the nine current pathways to specialist GP status into two – the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. This supports non-VR doctors to qualify as VR over a five year grandfathering period through a new Government supported, college led training pathway. This will complement reforms to Medicare billing arrangements.

Why is this important?

The GP workforce is growing at three times the rate of the population, with more overseas trained doctors and non-VR doctors delivering GP services. Structured pathways in combination with other incentives will encourage doctors to gain increased qualifications. There is also growth in medical training numbers for medical students and graduates, without an equivalent increase in GP training places.

The Government will continue to subsidise a proportion of training places. From 2021, an additional 100 places will be funded for medical practitioners to become rural generalist doctors. Targets for the distribution of places across training regions and remoteness areas, informed by improved data, will ensure a continued focus on rural and remote GP workforce distribution.

Who will benefit?

Patients in rural and remote areas will benefit from more qualified GPs distributed across training regions and communities, and in areas where they are most needed.

By enrolling on a formal pathway to Fellowship with the colleges, medical practitioners seeking to become a VR GP will have access to the highest value Medicare Benefits Schedule GP items during training. Between 2019 and 2023, non-VR medical practitioners will be able to access a training subsidy to support them to attain Fellowship.

How much will this cost?

The Stronger Rural Health Strategy is a \$550 million investment to support improved rural health services.