



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Assistant Minister for Health
Senator for New South Wales
Deputy Leader of the Nationals in the Senate

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$2.93 Million to Support Ballarat Medical Students

The Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Fiona Nash, was in Ballarat today to open a new student accommodation facility designed to help universities train medical students locally, giving them a taste of living and working in regional Victoria.

Opening the University of Melbourne's Rural Health Academic Centre Student Accommodation in Alfredton, Minister Nash said the Australian Government had invested \$2.93 million to develop the modern facility.

The fully-furnished accommodation consists of eight two storey units and can house up to 32 people. It will be used by medical students from the University of Melbourne and Deakin University while they undertake clinical placements.

"This investment in Ballarat's medical training infrastructure will ensure more medical students can live and train and, potentially work, in a regional area," Minister Nash said.

"This is important as trainee health professionals often choose to work in the communities where they complete their training.

"As part of their education, students provide health services to local people through the Ballarat Base Hospital and community health services. This is great news for patients in Ballarat and the surrounding areas as it helps to take some of the pressure off existing health services."

The accommodation forms part of the University of Melbourne's Rural Health Academic Centre, which operates Rural Clinical Schools in Ballarat, Shepparton and Wangaratta.

Minister Nash said the Government was committed to training Australia's next generation of health professionals and giving them the skills they need to meet head-on the nation's health challenges. In 2013, approximately 874 students were training at a rural clinical school nationally.

"The Government is also supporting up to 100 additional medical intern places per year over the next four years. These places will be available for international students in private hospitals across the country. The Government is also supporting around a further 500 scholarships for nursing and allied health professionals, which will have an emphasis on rural health," Minister Nash said.

“A \$52.5 million investment is also being made in rural health infrastructure to help rural and regional general practices build and improve their facilities so that they can train more students, more junior doctors and more registrars.

“By building a larger and better skilled regional health workforce, we can go a long way to delivering better care to the one in three Australians that live outside a major city.”

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