



Australian Government

**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie**

Minister for Regional Services, Sport,  
Local Government and Decentralisation

**The Hon Damian Drum**

Member for Murray

## Joint Media Release

---

### **\$6.6 million to support new medical degree in Shepparton**

31 January 2019

The Liberal Nationals Government will provide \$6.6 million to the University of Melbourne to support a new rural medical school program in Shepparton as part of the Murray-Darling Medical Schools Network.

Announcing the investment in Shepparton today with the Member for Murray, Damian Drum, the Minister for Regional Services, Senator Bridget McKenzie, said the funding would support aspiring doctors to undertake medical training locally in the Goulburn Valley.

The university will receive \$6.6 million in capital works funding to expand student accommodation in Shepparton to house medical students for the first year of their degree. It will also fund additional teaching, learning, conference and office spaces on campus.

“This is transformational for aspiring rural doctors to study and train locally in the regions,” Minister McKenzie said.

“The new program will offer 30 Commonwealth-supported medical places each year from 2022.”

A pathway into the program will be provided to 15 graduates of La Trobe University’s new three-year Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Medical) undergraduate degree, which will begin in Albury-Wodonga and Bendigo this year.

Clinical training will take place across 10 locations in the region, including Wangaratta, Benalla, Bendigo and Cobram.

“We know doctors are more likely to stay where they train and this underpins the thinking behind the Murray-Darling Medical Schools Network. If we train medical students in the regions, they are more likely to want to stay in the regions,” Minister McKenzie said.

“Increasing opportunities for rural students to get into medicine, and for people interested in practising in rural and regional Australia to study in country areas, is essential to improving access to local medical services.”

Mr Drum said today’s announcement was an exciting development for the Shepparton district.

“This investment is exactly what we need to support Goulburn Valley residents who wish to pursue medical studies,” Mr Drum said.

“It will support local students to undertake the majority of their medical training right here in Shepparton – which means they will be more likely to stay here, building up the local health workforce, when they complete their studies.”

The investment announced today forms part of the new Murray-Darling Medical Schools Network, which the Liberal Nationals Government is establishing in regional centres in New South Wales and Victoria.

“The Murray-Darling Medical Schools Network will turn the current city-dominated model of medical training on its head, with the majority of training happening in the regions,” Minister McKenzie said.

“The network will allow students from the Murray-Darling region of New South Wales and Victoria to train in their local areas.”

The Murray-Darling Medical Schools Network forms part of the Government’s \$550 million 2018-19 Budget investment in the Stronger Rural Health Strategy to improve access to health services for people living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

**Media Contacts:**

**For Minister McKenzie:** John Chanter: 0419 284 686

**For Damian Drum:** Mark Skilbeck: 499 598 088