



THE HON BARNABY JOYCE MP

Member for New England
Deputy Prime Minister
Leader of The Nationals

THE HON DR DAVID GILLESPIE MP

Assistant Minister for Health

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal Coalition Government boosts funding for Tamworth Health Precinct

The Tamworth Health Precinct has been given a further boost thanks to the Coalition Government's announcement that Newcastle University is investing \$29.24 million under the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program.

Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Dr David Gillespie, and Deputy Prime Minister and Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, today visited the University of Newcastle's Department of Rural Health in Tamworth, which offers the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program.

Dr Gillespie said a significant proportion of the funding package had been allocated to the University's Tamworth campus programmes.

"Health and medical students in Tamworth and the New England will receive greater opportunities to train locally as a result of our government's investment in this important programme," Dr Gillespie said.

"Barnaby Joyce has been a very strong advocate for this initiative which brings more doctors through training to the regions, and I am very pleased with what Newcastle University is achieving here in Tamworth," Dr Gillespie.

"The Coalition Government is resolute in its commitment that all Australians — regardless of where they live — have access to first rate health and medical services," Dr Gillespie said.

"However, it's not as simple as just building more hospitals or clinics. We need to make sure we have the right distribution of health professionals in the right areas, and to do this, we must first invest in our future workforce.

In 2016, 29 students undertook a long-term medical placement in Tamworth.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that, students from a rural background and who undertake long-term placements in a similar setting are more likely to return to work in rural and regional parts of Australia when they graduate.

“Through localised training, students are also able to experience first-hand the unique health challenges faced by Australians living outside metropolitan areas,” Mr Joyce said.

“It’s great to see that students are also encouraged to participate in local community partnerships and programs such as the *After School Learning Centres* and *The Teddy Bear Hospitals*, run by the University’s Tamworth Campus. This is a great example of health students engaging with the community.

The Federal Coalition Government is providing more than \$29 million to the University of Newcastle under the RHMT program from January 2016 through to December 2018 to support rural training for health and medical students.

For more information, contact the Minister Gillespie's Office on (02) 6277 4960