



THE HON MARK BUTLER MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Clinical School opens at Victor Harbor

The new Victor Harbor Education Centre, officially opened today by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler, is a major addition to the Commonwealth Government's successful Rural Clinical Schools Program.

The Commonwealth Government has invested more than \$1 million in this new purpose-built teaching facility located in the grounds of the South Coast District Hospital. The Centre will house up to ten undergraduate medical students enrolled in the Flinders University Rural Clinical School at a time.

Construction of the building provided a significant lift to the local workforce and economy. The Centre began operating in March this year benefiting local medical professionals through practical, professional and educational support.

The Flinders University Rural Clinical School was established in 2001. Since this time, the Commonwealth Government has provided \$29.1 million in funding, including \$6.7 million for capital infrastructure. The new Victor Harbor Education Centre joins facilities in Renmark, Mt Gambier and the Barossa Valley.

The Flinders University Rural Clinical School is part of the current network of 14 Rural Clinical Schools managed by 13 universities across Australia. Through this program, medical students experience medical practice, and life, in rural and regional settings and are encouraged to settle and build their careers in these communities.

A recent independent evaluation of the Rural Clinical Schools Program, commissioned by the Commonwealth Government, found that this initiative is having a positive impact on improving the sustainability of rural health services.

It is backed by the requirement for 25 percent of Commonwealth-supported medical students to undertake at least one year of their undergraduate clinical training in rural areas.

This year's Budget demonstrated the Rudd Government's commitment to improving rural health and medical services with a \$134.4 million package of measures – including reforms to the incentive scheme for doctors working in rural and remote areas.

The reforms mean that from 1 July 2010 many doctors working in the Hills Mallee Fleurieu region will for the first time become eligible for government grant payments to continue to practise in the area.

Doctors moving to the area from the cities will also be eligible for generous relocation grants.

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