



**The Hon Dr David Gillespie MP**  
**Assistant Minister for Health**  
**Member for Lyne**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

20 April 2017

**Rural doctors not affected by 457 visa changes**

Assistant Health Minister, Dr David Gillespie, has reassured doctors and rural communities on the impacts of the Coalition Government's changes to the temporary and permanent employer-sponsored skilled migration schemes.

"The changes announced this week will not have any significant impact on the ability of rural and regional areas to recruit temporary skilled overseas trained health professionals," Minister Gillespie said.

"While I note the concerns of the Australian Medical Association and the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia about the future of international medical graduates in rural communities, appropriately qualified health professionals will continue to have access to Australia's Temporary Migration scheme."

Minister Gillespie said the changes are intended to prioritise opportunities for Australian workers and professionals, and will be introduced in stages through to March 2018.

"Initially, the skilled occupation lists have been tightened to remove some occupations, including some health occupations where very few people had accessed the visa over the last four years. This will have minimal impact, with less than a handful of overseas professionals currently working in Australia," Minister Gillespie said.

Minister Gillespie said the visa assessment process for overseas trained doctors is already quite stringent.

"All overseas trained doctors, regardless of their visa category, are assessed against their prior work experience and their English language skills before they can enter Australia. This testing is conducted as part of the medical registration and credentialing processes that inform visa application assessments," Minister Gillespie said.

"Many temporary resident overseas trained doctors who have entered Australia under the current 457 visa arrangements are being employed to work in state-approved supervised Area of Need positions.

"These positions are approved only after the prospective employer has completed labour market testing and can demonstrate a need for an overseas-trained doctor to fill a position.

"In addition, the Medicare legislation places a requirement on overseas trained doctors to work in areas recognised as districts of workforce shortage."

Minister Gillespie said there will be consultation process ahead of the more significant changes in March next year.

“The Department of Health will continue to ensure that any future changes to the skilled occupation lists support health workforce requirements.

He said the Coalition Government remains heavily invested in boosting the Australian-trained regional and rural workforce through initiatives such as the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training program.

“As part of this initiative, we’ve recently announced an additional \$54.4 million over two years to 2018-19 for 26 regional training hubs and three additional University Departments of Rural Health,” Minister Gillespie said.

“This will provide additional opportunities for health and medical students to live, study and work in rural and regional Australia and improve access to health services for the people that live in those communities.”

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