



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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government boosts funding for Manning Health Precinct

The Taree Health Precinct has been given a further boost thanks to the Coalition Government's announcement that Newcastle University will receive \$29.24 million between 2016 and 2018 under the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program.

Federal Assistant Minister for Rural Health and Local MP, Dr David Gillespie, said a significant proportion of the funding package has been allocated to the University Department of Rural Health which operates the campus in Taree, and another in Tamworth and Moree.

"This significant investment by our Government in the Manning campus is testament to the wonderful job being done by Newcastle University in the education and training of medical and health students," Dr Gillespie said while touring the Manning Education Centre campus.

Health and medical students in Taree will continue to receive increased training opportunities through this Coalition Government initiative in partnership with the University of Newcastle's Department of Rural Health.

Dr Gillespie today visited the site in Taree, to see the latest programs on offer for health and medical students, under the RHMT program.

Last year, students at the Taree Campus completed 932 weeks of placement activities across a number of allied health disciplines and nursing.

"It's great to see health students undertaking their placements in rural and regional areas of Australia.

"Training in rural and regional environments gives local students the opportunity to stay connected to their home and communities, and also allows students from city origins to experience directly the unique health challenges faced by Australians in these areas.

"We know that Australians who live in the bush generally face greater challenges for their health outcomes than those Australians who live in city areas.

"In order to address these issues, we need to ensure we have the right distribution of health professionals in the right areas, but to do this, we must first invest in our workforce," Dr Gillespie said.

In 2001, the University of Newcastle's Department of Rural Health established the *Inter-professional Learning Program* to provide students with the opportunity to gain exposure to other health disciplines during their health placements.

"The concept of interprofessional learning is such a great way to get students to start thinking about health treatment in a holistic way, instead of each health profession training and working in silos," Dr Gillespie said.

Last year, three major interprofessional learning seminars were delivered at the Manning Education Centre, covering stroke, trauma and a coroners' case, with a total of 162 students participating.

Since its establishment, the centre has supported students in the disciplines of medicine through to occupational therapy to undertake placements at the Manning Base Hospital.

As of 2016, there are approximately 20 medical students undertaking placements at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital.

Since 2013, the Coalition Government has increased funding for rural training opportunities for students of the University of Newcastle's Department of Rural Health by 37 per cent. This will support a doubling of nursing and allied health placements.

The Coalition Government has provided funding of \$487.2 million over three academic years to the 18 universities participating in the RHMT program to support rural training opportunities for health students.

For more information, contact the Minister's Office on 0433 141 433