MEDIA RELEASE

27 June 2017

Scholarships to Improve Rural Health Services

A new scholarship scheme will support health professionals working in rural and regional areas to increase their skills and capabilities.

Assistant Minister for Health, Dr David Gillespie, announced today at the University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health campus in Taree, that the new scholarship program would be administered by a consortium of Rural Workforce Agencies (RWAs), led by Health Workforce Queensland.

“This new Health Workforce Scholarship Program will deliver better outcomes and return on investment in terms of health outcomes for patients,” Dr Gillespie said.

“For the first time, scholarships will be allocated based on the needs of communities – whether for GPs, nurses, dentists or allied health professionals.”

CEO of the NSW Rural Doctors Network, Mr Richard Colbran, said the RWAs were looking forward to working closely with Primary Health Networks, local and state governments and other workforce planning groups to determine what skills are needed.

“The Rural Workforce Agencies welcome these latest initiatives from the Government which focus on increasing education and training opportunities for the rural primary health workforce,” Mr Colbran said.

“RWAs will work to ensure a cohesive approach to building a sustainable, appropriately skilled workforce that will facilitate greater access to health services for regional, rural and remote communities across Australia.”

The program is one part of the Government’s significant investment in the future supply and distribution of the health workforce. Dr Gillespie also announced that the consortium of RWAs would also deliver the John Flynn Placement Program, a program that arranges placements of students with rural doctor mentors.

“We are very committed to improve rural health services, and rural health outcomes,” Dr Gillespie said.

“The John Flynn Placement Program provides a unique experience for students to learn about life as a rural doctor and connect with a rural community.”

For more information, contact the Minister’s Office on 0435 686 313