



The Hon Dr David Gillespie MP
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Training more doctors in the bush to benefit more rural communities

A program that provides young doctors with the experience of training in a rural general practice or Aboriginal Medical Services and provides more medical care to regional, rural and remote communities is being extended by the Federal Coalition Government.

Federal Regional Health Minister, Dr David Gillespie said extending the Rural Junior Doctor Training Innovation Fund (RJDTIF) for another year will mean 60 fulltime-equivalent rurally based interns and postgraduate doctors can undertake training in country practices.

“This program allows early-career doctors to take the opportunity to train in the rural communities where clinical opportunities are abundant, while also enjoying the benefits of a regional or rural lifestyle,” Dr Gillespie said.

“There is strong evidence that undertaking medical training in a regional or rural setting increases retention rates.

“The program has already benefitted more than 50 towns and 80 sites across regional, rural, and remote locations, such Nhulunbuy in the NT, Goondiwindi in QLD and Bega in NSW with approximately 814 rotations since 2018.”

Dr Gillespie, who worked as a regional doctor for more than 30 years before becoming a MP, said the funding extension is being provided to the 15 organisations currently funded through the program.

“The organisations receiving funding for 2022, will support around 240 rotations in general practices and Aboriginal Medical Services, meaning increased access to health professionals for those in the regions,” Dr Gillespie said.

“The program helps to build our rural health workforce and helps to deliver quality healthcare to regional, rural and remote Australians.

“The Nationals in Government are committed to improving access to quality health care in the bush and helping early-career doctors to gain experience in primary care while they progress their medical training in rural Australia is an important foundation for that.”

The Federal Government is providing \$11.7 million to continue the RJDTIF program for the 2022 academic year. The funding is being provided through a closed non-competitive approach and rotation locations will be announced at the conclusion of grant round.

More than \$36 million has been provided to the program which assists junior doctors in their first or second postgraduate years to train in rural general practices by the Federal Government since 2018.

The new John Flynn Prevocational Doctor Program (JFPDP), announced as part of the 2021-22 Budget, will consolidate the RJDTIF to increase rural primary care rotations for hospital-based prevocational doctors from 440 rotations (100 FTE) in 2022 incrementally to 800 rotations (200 FTE) by 2025. This will enable an additional 360 hospital-based junior to doctors to experience rural general practice.

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