

Tuesday December 12 2023

Executive Officer - Medical
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)
GPO Box 9958
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Re: Consultation on the Recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine

We are writing to you as the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Future Generalists Committee to show our overwhelming support of the joint-application to have Rural Generalist Medicine recognised as a specialist field within General Practice.

The ACRRM Future Generalists Committee is made up of medical students and pre-vocational doctors (interns and residents), who are aspiring to become rural generalists around Australia. Our role in the College is: to represent the broad interests of medical student and intern/resident members of the College; to ensure that these are reflected in internal decision-making and activities; and, to advance these and the mission and values of the College in external forums relevant to medical education, rural health, and careers in rural medicine.

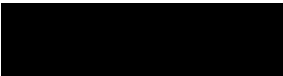
Our committee believes it is imperative that more be done to improve access to care for people living in rural and remote areas especially for the First Nations communities in these areas. We recognise that addressing these issues will take a multifaceted approach involving the efforts of all medical colleges. We believe however, that a strong Rural Generalist workforce represents an important aspect of reform that can contribute to system change and improve access to high quality care.

Rural Generalists can contribute to the best possible services to rural and remote communities where they are can collaborate effectively with specialists from other colleges, whether it be through shared rosters, team based digital health, or effective collaborative care with consultant specialists, in which they provide the most possible local patient care between consultant appointments. We expect that national specialist recognition will appropriately acknowledge these doctors and their competencies and will facilitate system change by enabling employment and planning to fully incorporate them and to build models of care making best use of their scope of practice.

As we are sure you are aware, there is a declining interest of medical students interested in a career in General Practice, and a predicted shortfall of 11,000 GPs by 2030. Whilst this is occurring, there is an increase in interest in a career in Rural Generalism which has been shown by the annual data collected by the Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand from graduating medical students. Therefore, we see the recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine as an important step to further legitimizing what is becoming a popular career choice for medical students. Failure to make this recognition, our committee believes, will send a negative message to students about what our profession values and will create further stigma against a career in general practice, and rural practice.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission and are more than willing to meet with you to discuss this further should the opportunity arise.

Yours sincerely,



Jasmine Davis (she/her) on behalf of the ACRRM Future Generalists Committee