

28 Nov 2023

Medical Board of Australia

Via email medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Re: Consultation on the recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine

We broadly support recognising rural generalist as a separate specialty. However, it is important to ensure that this proposal does not inadvertently result in GPs and other medical specialists (e.g. general physicians, emergency physicians) being unable to work as locums or permanently but in “normal” general practice roles or specialist generalist roles in rural areas due to not being qualified as a rural generalist. In addition, if “normal” GPs have lower Medicare rebates for broadly comparable work in rural areas simply by virtue of not being rural generalists, this would likely also create resentment and be a disincentive for them to do any rural work, thus worsening the healthcare shortage in rural areas this recognition is purported to address. We are seriously considering working rurally in 10 years or so, but would be most unlikely to train to get a separate Fellowship if we were barred from working or did not have access to the same Medicare rebates for the same work, so would likely abandon plans to do so if this was required.

We hope the MBA will take these concerns into account when considering the appropriateness of recognising this as a separate specialty.

Sincerely,

[checked electronically]

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