

MEDIA RELEASE

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Elmore GP honoured

The 2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards acknowledged Elmore GP Dr Adel Asaid for his commitment to the region, at a ceremony in Melbourne on the weekend.

Dr Asaid received an award for his Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities.

Victorian rural doctors were nominated by their peers, patients and local community members in three categories, 35 Years Service to Rural Communities, for *Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities* or as a *New Rural Doctor*.

Health Minister, Hon. Daniel Andrews presented the doctors and their families with the awards in front of 225 guests at a gala dinner.

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) chief executive Claire Austin explains the Awards' significance.

"The Awards provide an opportunity to pause and reflect on the contributions that our doctors and their families make to Victoria.

"Additionally, the Awards offer Victorians a way of saying 'thanks' to a corner stone of the population that sustain local communities in so many ways," Ms Austin said.

The 2009 Award recipients were from all corners of the state, Ballarat, Sale, St Leonards, Moe, Lorne, Ouyen, Traralgon, Mount Beauty, Beechworth, Wangaratta, Portland, Lakes Entrance, Benalla, Phillip Island, Traralgon and Camperdown.

RWAV chairman Dr Philip Webster also paid tribute to this year's recipients.

"As is the nature of general practice and medicine these contributions have been diverse and broad ranging.

"Amongst all the recipients honoured, the common thread was doctors sustaining their local community," Dr Webster said.

An awards panel comprising RWAV, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine, Rural Doctors Association of Victoria Australian Medical Association Vic and Rural Medical Family Network representatives assessed nominees against the criteria for each of the categories.

The Awards were proudly sponsored by Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), a statutory body established to provide risk management consultancy, insurance and site risk surveys to Victorian State Government departments and agencies.

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Background information

Dr Adel Asaid, Elmore – for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities

“I see our model as one that can deliver on a community’s medical care needs whilst offering a better lifestyle balance for our doctors which, in turn, is more likely to attract more doctors to rural practice,” Dr Adel Asaid said.

“Elmore lost its hospital in 1994 and its resident doctor soon after. For four years the town was without a doctor and residents seeking medical attention and care were forced to drive 20 minutes to a neighbouring town.

“It was 1998 when I decided to open a medical practice in Elmore. In the beginning, there was just one receptionist and myself. We now service over 5000 patients from Elmore and surrounding districts, and employ six GPs.

“Our group and I were invited by the Boort community to operate the Boort Medical Practice in March 2006, when the existing doctor finished his tenure. Boort Medical Practice now has two full time GPs, two part time GPs, and offers services in Pyramid Hill as well.

“The Elmore Primary Health Service is a successful, innovative and comprehensive Primary Health Service that emerged from a partnership between a private medical practice and a community health service. This health model also means that now there is a single reference point for all health related services.

“During my time running a practice in a small community, my team and I have been developing a new model for GP rural practice, which sees us using the larger group concept to promote self sufficiency in terms of providing the practice doctors with ongoing peer and mentor support, time release for educational learning opportunities and for general lifestyle pursuits.

“Yet for me, the highlight of practising in a rural community is the feeling of support from the local residents. It is such a small, tight knit community and they have welcomed our service with open arms. It’s nice to feel so wanted and appreciated. I can recommend practicing in a rural community to anyone. The amazing sense of togetherness and interaction with all groups of the community cannot be experienced elsewhere.”

About RWAV – Rural Workforce Agency Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation working with communities that have underserved health needs. We do this through a number of initiatives that recruit, support and advocate for the health workforce throughout rural and regional Victoria. rwav.com.au