

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ouyen GP honoured

The 2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards acknowledged former Ouyen GP Dr Fola Bello for his commitment to the region, at a ceremony in Melbourne on the weekend.

Dr Bello 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 including, Ballarat, Sale, St Leonards, Moe, Elmore, Lorne, 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 Fola Bello, Ouyen – for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities

Upon notification of receiving a 2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Award Dr Belo made the following statement.

“Rural practice can be hard and demanding, but fulfilling and as rewarding as urban practice ... It is giving back a bit of you to the community.

“The success of any rural practice and practitioner is directly linked to the supporting structures and facilities. My family and my community have been my rocks,” Dr Belo said.

Nomination information available upon request.

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