

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Trafalgar GP Honoured**

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

Doctor Brown 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, Ouyen, 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 James Brown, Trafalgar - for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities**

James continues to provide outstanding commitment and leadership in enhancing medical education.

James is widely respected amongst his peers as an outstanding medical educator, Director of Training, GP for the Trafalgar community and taking a lead role in developing a Train the Trainer project for Medical Educators across Australia. He is the architect of GPRime.

James successfully integrated his considerable knowledge of teaching and supervision and his academic interest in learning plans into an on-line learning platform specifically customised to the needs of GP training. It is a unique significant national innovation in registrar training. James has assisted the many other RTPs now using GPRime through on-site training in their regions. This has led to the formation of the GPRime Users Community as a forum for collaboration in the further development of GPRime. These developments in GPRime are a remarkable demonstration of James' innovation and foresight. James is also the architect of shared practice-hospital based Obstetric Bridging Posts at Warragul, Leongatha and Foster.

These provide great training opportunities for registrars and meet a real rural community need for general practice obstetricians. He is also promoting the development of this model for other special and advanced skills posts. As Director of Training, James is an excellent role model and inspiring teacher. He is an encourager who leads by example, listens to registrar aspirations and inspires them to develop to their full potential. He is a great advocate for general practice training. Registrars and medical students are included as part of the team in his medical practice and treated with equal care and respect.

He creates and fosters relationships with hospitals, divisions and universities- working in a cooperative and mutually enabling way to achieve great outcomes for the registrars- and also other students, and doctors in the area. He is an RACGP examiner and an active member of the national medical educators' network. Most importantly, James is a lovely doctor- committed to his patients, his community and as a result, passionate about registrar training. He is fair, kind, a man of great integrity- and well deserving of the award "Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities"

**About Dr James Brown**

My decision to embark on a career in general practice took shape during my residency years. I took 1987 off from formal training to work in Nepal where I became convinced General Practice was for me.

I wanted to work in an area of need, to work in an area that I found stimulating and to have flexibility in choosing my style of practice. Rural general practice in Australia was the answer.

Helen and I were married in February 1988 and moved to Trafalgar for one year to trial rural living and rural general practice. We are still in Trafalgar and still married!

General practice in Trafalgar held on to me for a number of reasons. The first is the integrity of living within the community in which I work. The second is the depth and breadth of the relationships I have in the community. The third is the variety of medicine and the last is the range of interests I have been able to develop living in the area.

Medicine and life in Trafalgar have provided me with a challenging and satisfying variety of both medical and non medical activities. I have been able to practice obstetrics, develop skills in psychological medicine and use a range of procedural skills. I have been able to develop teaching skills and have had the opportunity to take on leadership in general practice training as the Director of Training of getGP – Gippsland's Regional Training provider. This has given me the opportunity for academic creativity.

Living and working in a small town requires that the person I am in my work is integrated with who I am socially. I very much value the relationships I have with my patients and my colleagues. I have had the privilege of travelling life journeys with a whole range of people.

*“Rural medicine offers a career that is also a life. My experience is that this life is a very rich and special one that grows in depth the longer the doctor stays with the community,”*  
*Dr Brown said.*