



## Media Release

Tuesday 27 May 2008

### Wangaratta Doctor Wins Award

Wangaratta doctor Leslie Bolitho was honoured for his outstanding service to the Victorian rural community at the prestigious, Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) 2008 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards, on Friday night in Melbourne.

Victorian rural doctors were nominated by their peers, patients and local community members in two categories, *35 Years of Service to Rural Communities* or *Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities*.

Dr Bolitho was one of ten recipients of the *Outstanding Service to Rural Communities* award.

Minister for Rural & Regional Development, the Hon. Jacinta Allan presented the doctors and their families with the awards at a gala dinner in the National Gallery of Victoria's Great Hall.

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria's (RWAV) Chairman and Mildura General Practitioner, Dr Philip Webster commends the doctors and their families for their commitment to rural Victorians.

"Our annual awards are significant as they're an opportunity to publicly acknowledge and honour our doctors for their dedication to rural Victorians," Dr Webster said.

"More importantly, the doctors provide terrific role models that will inspire and enthuse our medical students to seriously consider a career as a rural GP."

The Awards were attended by 200 guests that included Award recipients and their families, health professionals from all disciplines and medical school students.

Other doctors who received an award herald from Apollo Bay, Ballarat, Mansfield, Wodonga, Shepparton, Hamilton, Orbost, Foster, Bendigo, Kerang, Portland, Mildura, Colac and Omeo.

An awards panel comprising Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine (ACCRM), RWAV, Rural Medical Family Network (RMFN), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Committee of Chairmen of Victorian State Committees of Medical Colleges, Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV) and Australian Medical Association Vic (AMA) representatives assessed each of the nominees against the criteria for each of the categories.

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For high resolution images or to discuss further story ideas please call Samantha Marnell on 0439 551 720.

## **Background information**

### **Dr Leslie Bolitho**

Some 20 years ago Dr Leslie Bolitho initiated the teaching program for medical students in Wangaratta, for students and registrars from the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He has been a Consultant at Northeast Health Wangaratta since 1982 and has also served many surrounding small communities.

He has been heavily involved with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, has served on the Executive of the Victorian Rural Physicians' Network and convened the first international Rural Internal Medicine Specialists conference.

In addition to all this, Leslie continues to teach and inspire young people. Recently, having worked with Dr Bolitho for a week, a student expressed a desire to do their final semester at Wangaratta instead of Royal Melbourne Hospital because of the inspiring experience they had with Leslie.