



Media Release

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Three Mildura Doctors Win Awards

Three Mildura doctors were honoured for their commitment to the region at the prestigious, Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) *2008 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards*, on Friday night in Melbourne.

Mildura doctors Vriender Grover, Donald Hartley and Vasa Skorupanovic were all winners of the awards, which acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Victoria's rural doctors and their spouses for the service and commitment they provide to the region.

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*.

The Mildura doctors were all recipients of the *35 Years of 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, Wangaratta, Hamilton, Orbost, Foster, Bendigo, Kerang, Portland, 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 Vriender Grover

Following completion of his post graduate training overseas, Dr Vriender Grover moved to Mildura in 1971 and soon afterwards entered ophthalmic private practice while also working at the Mildura Base Hospital.

Vriender puts his seamless induction into community life down to the exceptional support and warmth provided by his colleagues and the broader community and the guidance of his mentor Dr John Blair.

Vriender has been at times the only Ophthalmologist in the area and his medical innovation saw the introduction of Modern Surgical Treatment of Cataracts to Mildura.

Vriender thanks Geeta, his wife for her continued support, allowing him to commit not only to Ophthalmology but to the community as well.

Dr Donald Hartley

Aside from a 2 year stint with the Defence and Aviation Ministry in Saudi Arabia in the mid 1990s, Donald Hartley has been in general practice in Mildura since 1972.

Donald has been an outstanding doctor to his patients day and night and over his career he has saved the lives of many people, especially children.

With patients stretching over 500 square miles from Robinvale to Ouyen, Donald is definitely kept busy as Senior Medical Officer of the Mildura Private Hospital and as Visiting Medical Officer at the Mildura Base Hospital.

Always a great support to the community, Donald is known to visit the "old people's home" just to chat with the locals.

Dr Vasa Skorupanovic

After graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1970, Vasa had decided on a career as a physician until a conversation late one Friday afternoon alerted him to "an opportunity" going begging" in Mildura.

That opportunity resulted in Vasa arriving in Mildura in 1972 with his heavily pregnant wife, Jill and their 12 month-old-son Peter .to start what Vasa calls his "baptism of fire" at the Mildura Base Hospital.

Under resourced and needing every ounce of initiative, Vasa was required to respond to many different situations that included a strange call one weekend from a distraught dog owner whose Labrador was in obstructed labour.

D Vasa Skorupanovic recommends life as a rural general practitioner because it offers so much variety and an opportunity to practise "cradle to grave medicine".