



**Media Release**  
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### **City Doctors plying their trade in the bush and making a difference**

Melbourne doctors have been flying to Mallee, North East and South West Victoria to offer specialist patient care to communities that would otherwise go without.

The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP), is funded by the Federal Government and administered throughout Victoria by the Rural Workforce Agency, Victoria (RWAV).

Dr Rosemary Masterson, is one of a group of specialists that has been flying to Mildura to provide care to local renal patients. She has found the experience very rewarding, especially in dealing with the local Aboriginal community, which makes up about 40 per cent of the local patients.

"It is a wonderful project to be involved in as our work gives local patients specialist services they would not be able to receive without travelling long distances," Dr Masterson said.

"By coming to Mildura, I gain a much better understanding of my patients, the environment they live in and factors that can and can't be changed in their lives. We have made great advances in here, to the extent that two patients are undertaking dialysis at home, which I think is a first in the country," she said.

Endocrinology specialist Associate Professor Richard O'Brien regularly visits Victoria's North East, giving diabetes and endocrinology patients care they otherwise would have to travel to Melbourne to receive.

"While diabetes is well managed by rural doctors in the area, there are still some difficult cases that require specialists," he said.

"I have found the work very interesting and exceptionally gratifying. The fact that people live in the country doesn't mean they don't have these problems," he said.

Dr Michael Duke, a Melbourne based psychiatrist has been travelling to the South West for three years, travelling each month to Portland and Heywood, where he works closely with local doctors at a patient-by-patient level and holds medical education seminars on topics like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He is also involved in a special area of interest, psychiatry for Indigenous people, working at Heywood's Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation.



## **About RWAV**

RWAV was established in 1998 to help overcome the shortage of rural doctors and improve access to medical services for rural Victorians. RWAV's recruitment programs and support services are available for all rural doctors, and include: marketing rural Victoria and rural medicine; marketing vacancies in rural practice; international and local recruitment; family support and locum services; professional development (training and grants) to support doctors moving into rural practice as well as to assist rural doctors to maintain their clinical and professional skills.

In addition, RWAV recruits and supports medical specialist outreach services, and undertakes workforce planning and research to inform government policy. RWAV acknowledges the support of the Australian Government Department of Health and Aging, and the Victorian Department of Human Services for their ongoing support and funding.

Further information on RWAV is available on the website at [www.rwav.com.au](http://www.rwav.com.au)

### **Media enquiries**

Patrick McClelland

Porter Novelli

Ph: 03 9289 9555 or 0409 499 419

Email: [pmcclelland@porternovelli](mailto:pmcclelland@porternovelli)