



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

May 2006

### **2006 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards**

Seventeen doctors from across the State have received the 2006 Victorian Rural Doctors' Award. The Awards were presented to the doctors at a formal dinner held at Bellinzona Grange, Hepburn Springs this month. The Awards were hugely successful when introduced last year, with 33 doctors honoured.

Auspiced by the Rural Workforce Agency, Victoria (RWAV) and supported by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV) and the Rural Medical Family Network (RMFN), the Awards are an acknowledgement of the outstanding work many doctors and their spouses have provided to rural Victoria.

The Awards were presented by Senator Judith Troeth, who noted that the celebration was particularly appropriate given current circumstances. "At a time where there is a critical shortage of General Practitioners in rural Victoria, there is no doubt that GPs in rural areas play a pivotal role in ensuring the health and well-being of people within their communities," she said.

"The work of the rural General Practitioner often goes unheralded. They work long and irregular hours with little relief and support. Nevertheless, the esteem in which doctors are held by the rural community is a testament to the work that they do."

In a message to the Award recipients, Victorian Premier Steve Bracks expressed his appreciation for "the invaluable service and contribution that rural doctors have made, and will continue to make, to rural Victoria."

"Rural doctor services are an integral part of health services in rural Victoria, serving to not only treat those who are ill, but also playing a vital role in promoting good health and supporting community growth and development," Mr Bracks said.

To download a copy of the commemorative 2006 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards Book visit the RWAV website at [www.rwav.com.au](http://www.rwav.com.au)

## List of Recipients

### *Forty plus years of Service to Rural Communities*

- Dr John Garner, Ballarat
- Dr David Hollands, Orbost
- Dr Margaret Hollands, Orbost
- Dr Francis Lyons, Yarrawonga
- Dr William Maling, Portland
- Dr Henry Moorhouse, Ballarat
- Dr Richard Oliver, Ballarat
- Dr William Stewart, Lang Lang
- Dr Brian Walklate, Charlton
- Dr John Williams, Inverloch

### *Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities*

- Dr Rebecca Dale, Castlemaine
- Dr Barry Dowty, Mildura
- Dr John Horton, Birchip
- Dr John Lockwood, Healesville
- Dr Eldon Lyon, Camperdown
- Dr Anne Stephenson, Torquay
- Dr David Wilson, Horsham

## About RWAV

RWAV was established in 1998 to overcome the shortage of rural doctors and improve access to medical services for rural Victorians. RWAV's recruitment programs and ongoing support services have been fundamental to increasing rural GP numbers in Victoria.

Today, RWAV is addressing workforce shortages in rural and regional towns. Some of its key priorities include the provision of support services for rural doctors and their families, professional development programs, locum support, marketing of rural general practice, recruitment of rural doctors including specialist outreach services, workforce planning and research to inform government policy.

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

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