



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ballarat Doctors Awarded for their Service to Rural Communities

Long serving General Practitioners, Dr John Garner, Dr Henry Moorhouse and Dr Richard Oliver were among the Award recipients of the Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards. The Awards recognise doctors and their spouses who have worked for 40 years or more in rural Victoria and/or have made an outstanding contribution to their rural community.

The Awards were developed by the Rural Workforce Agency, Victoria (RWAV), the statewide organisation responsible for the recruitment and ongoing support of doctors in rural Victoria. The Awards were also supported by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV) and Rural Medical Family Network (RMFN).

Dr Garner immigrated to Australia from England in 1959, working at the Ballarat Base Hospital for two years after his arrival. He then moved into General Practice at the Carn-Brae Clinic in Ballarat and stayed there until his retirement in 2002. Dr Garner became involved in the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners after obtaining his fellowship. He was the first Chairman of the Ballarat and District Division of General Practice, was President from 1995 to 1997 and the Area Coordinator for 20 years.

Born and raised in Victoria, Dr. Henry Moorhouse studied medicine at Melbourne University and graduated in 1954. Dr. Moorhouse has held a number of positions working within the Royal Women's Hospital and the Ballarat Base Hospital. Keen to explore the world, Dr. Moorhouse incorporated his love of travel into his passion for medicine through a six-month exchange with a doctor in Hereford, UK.

Dr. Richard Oliver also received the prestigious Award for diligently serving the Ballarat community for more than forty years. Dr. Oliver commenced his medical career in 1954 at the Tamworth Base Hospital before later working as a surgeon at the Ballarat Base Hospital and also at St. John of God Hospital.

Working in the Ballarat area has been a very fulfilling experience for Dr. Oliver, who credits his long service to the relaxing atmosphere of rural life. "Living in the country is healthier," he said. "There is not much traffic, you don't have to travel far to get to work and parking is not a problem! You have a better relationship with your patients in the country."

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

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

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