



MEDIA RELEASE

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Birchip Doctor Awarded for his Contribution to Rural Communities

General Practitioner Dr John Horton was 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).

Born in India in 1935, Dr Horton came to Australia in 1944 after the passing of his father. Following his graduation from Melbourne University, Dr Horton worked in Fiji for six years. In 1973, he moved back to Australia where he has practiced procedural general practice in the town of Birchip.

In his years of service, Dr. Horton has been involved with many practical aspects of medicine, including obstetrics, surgery, radiology and the provision of anaesthetics to nine hospitals within the region. Dr Horton has found the experience of practicing in the region very rewarding.

When asked what advice he could give to other doctors considering rural practice, Dr. Lyons said, "Medicine is a serving profession. Go where you are needed. Your service will be truly appreciated and rewarding." The RWAV Award is the fifth professional accolade received by the doctor, who also received the Australian Doctor Award in 1992.

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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