



MEDIA RELEASE

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Charlton Doctor Awarded for his Service to Rural Communities

Long serving General Practitioner Dr. Brian Walklate 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).

As a rural GP with 53 years of experience, Dr. Walklate has made an outstanding contribution to the local community. He has committed to delivering 24 hour, seven day a week service for more than 40 years.

In addition to consulting with his own patients, Dr. Walklate has established a rural ambulance service in Charlton and teaches surgical skills to doctors in surrounding areas. He is also a member of the Charlton Bush Nursing Committee and a representative of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association.

Dr. Walklate has had a high level of involvement with the local community, both as a doctor and also as a supporter of several local committee groups. Through his participation, Dr. Walklate has become a trusted and valued member of the community. As a result, he has previously been recognised with a number of prestigious awards, including Citizen of the Year in 1994.

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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