



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Inverloch Doctor Awarded for his Service to Rural Communities**

Long serving General Practitioner Dr John Williams 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), and 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 Williams has had a rich and varied career serving the communities of rural Australia. He has worked with Community and Child Health Services, training Aboriginal Health Workers to provide care throughout a country area bigger than Victoria.

Dr Williams was later employed by the Victorian Education Department as school health doctor and served many years as a locum for the South Gippsland region.

Notably, Dr. Williams also played a role in setting up South Gippsland Division of General Practice, of which he is a life member. His wife, Elizabeth, was also involved in making the venture a success, completing essential secretarial duties and developing x-rays for diagnostic use in the clinic.

Dr. Williams has gone on to become a life Governor of Hastings and the recipient of the Centenary of Federation Medal for contribution to society.

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)

### **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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