

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ballarat region health services unite

Ballarat region communities are set to benefit from an initiative that supports local medical needs and improves access to health service models.

General practitioners, practice managers, nurses, health services, local government and medical educators took part in a GP-focussed “roundtable” last week to identify positive solutions to the region’s health workforce shortages.

Ballarat & District Division of General Practice CEO Andrew McPherson outlines some of the key outcomes.

“Our combined efforts will see a regional approach to attracting, recruiting and retaining GP registrars and medical students through a number of initiatives, including encouragement of local training throughout the career pathway from undergraduate student to general practitioner.

“We plan to increase the number of general practices that offer training for future doctors in the region with a greater focus on support, resulting in more access to general practitioners,” Mr McPherson said.

According to the latest GP workforce data, one-third of general practitioners within the Ballarat region hope to reduce their working hours or retire within the next five years.

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) Chief Executive Claire Austin explains the need for a coordinated approach.

“We need to put the Ballarat communities’ health needs in the middle of our planning process and develop long-term health workforce solutions around the region’s requirements.

“No matter what our professional role is, we need to achieve the same thing – better health for the Ballarat region.”

Health organisations that participated in the “roundtable” were Ballarat & District Division of General Practice, RWAV, Victoria Felix Medical Education, the Department of Human Services, Ballarat Health Services, St John of God Hospital, Beaufort and Skipton Health Services, Ballan & District Health Service, Hepburn Health Service, Ballarat Community Health Centre, Ballarat Group Practice, Beaufort and Skipton Medical Practices, Creswick Medical Centre, Gillies Street Medical Practice, Mair Street General Practice, Springs Medical Centre (Daylesford), Sturt Medical Practice, the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Ballarat City Council, and Hepburn Shire.

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About RWAV – Rural Workforce Agency Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation working with communities that have underserved health needs. We do this through a number of initiatives that recruit, support and advocate for the health workforce throughout rural and regional Victoria. www.rwav.com.au