



RURAL DOCTORS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

'Supporting Rural Doctors and Rural Communities'

MEDIA RELEASE

“Goodwill Bridges” the script for health workforce ills

President of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, Dr Dan Halliday today reminded Queensland Health’s managers that building goodwill by “doing a few favours” would help to avoid recurring workforce crises.

“Five of our members have recently rallied to help out with birthing services in Emerald and Goondiwindi,” Dr Halliday said. “That has been possible because we’ve got a strong network with loads of goodwill and it’s something Queensland Health managers can and should learn to do for themselves.”

Dr Halliday is also coordinating RDAQ efforts to find skilled doctors for Biloela and Gladstone Hospitals where birthing and anaesthetic services are at risk.

“We congratulate Qld Health’s managers who have had the foresight to look outside the box and ask for help early,” Dr Halliday said. “But there’s a lesson for the whole of Queensland Health here: to have friends to call on, you have to cultivate these networks over years, not weeks.”

RDAQ has proposed a simple 3-point plan for Queensland Health’s district managers and CEOs:

- Meet all the rural doctors (public and private sector) in your district, in person, at least once a year and preferably meet their families too.
- Network with rural doctors at a key rural health conference at least once a year, such as the Rural Doctors Association, Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine, or National Rural Health Alliance conferences.
- Find at least one “favour” you can do, for each doctor or their family, each year. This could be as simple as an extra air-conditioner in the hospital house or a key training opportunity for a doctor.

“It doesn’t matter which corner of the State you’re managing: from Mt Isa to Metro-South,” Dr Halliday said. “If you have a country facility like Burketown, Biloela or Beaudesert then as CEO, you have a service that can flourish on your personal attention (or die of neglect).”

“Aussies always go the extra mile to give a mate a hand, especially in the country,” Dr Halliday said, pointing out that hundreds or even thousands of kilometres were travelled by the doctors who helped out at Goondiwindi and Emerald. “We’ll leave families and our own commitments aside if need be – for a mate.”

“Queensland Health managers have to start this year to build personal relationships that will see them into the next five years. They can only call in favours if they’ve done a few favours themselves. ‘Mates rates’ only beat market rates if you’ve got mates to call on.”

“Short-sighted management in the past has burnt too many bridges: it’s time to build “Goodwill Bridges” in the country so we can all look forward to healthy futures.”

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