

Train to retain - RDAQ calls for training parity

Better supporting doctors in rural training pathways is a key factor in addressing current crippling workforce issues according to the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ).

The leading advocacy voice for Queensland's rural doctors and the communities they serve has today released its ***Doctors in Rural Training Policy Position***, staunchly advocating for improved training opportunities.

RDAQ President Dr Alex Dunn said the policy identified a list of key enablers to achieve greater retention for rural sites and, importantly, parity with city-based specialty training programs.

"Remote and rural medical services in Queensland are faced with declining viability, requiring urgent additional incentives and support to ensure ongoing stability and sustainability," Dr Dunn said.

"Positive education, training, supervision and access to professional development opportunities have been identified as vitally important factors in the work satisfaction and retention of rural doctors," he said.

"Therefore, we know, enhancing the training journey of prevocational doctors in rural and remote settings will encourage more of them to stay on past their training.

"The case for acting on these strategies is time critical. The underpinning issues are impacting doctors training now, to the detriment of their own experiences, the workforce, and rural health outcomes."

The policy highlights seven principal areas of action including: access to training; supervision; protected teaching time; fellowship training study leave; professional development leave; strong workforce and collaboration.

On behalf of its RDAQ Doctors in Rural Training (DiRT) Peer Network led by Co-chairs Dr Gabrielle Keating and Dr Vidhushan Paheerathan, the policy calls upon employers, supervisors, administrators, and colleges to review and optimise their rural and remote training programs.

Dr Keating – originally from sea-side Yeppoon and Dr Paheerathan – born in Sri Lanka and raised in Sydney, have walked different paths west to Mt Isa where they are both now based after stints of rural training as students.

"I was only coming out west for a six-week placement, that was four years ago," Dr Keating said.

"The sense of community is so strong out here, the need for healthcare is also very evident and the opportunities and experiences for rural doctors are impressive, challenging and rewarding.

"It is vital doctors have the right skills and knowledge to best meet the needs of our rural and remote communities, that all hinges on excellent training."

The full policy is available [HERE](#).

For more information on [RDAQ Peer Networks](#) visit the RDAQ [website](#).