

Rural doctors say General Practice is ‘the foundation’ of healthy Queenslanders

Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ) has released its Remote & Rural General Practice in Queensland Policy Position affirming its stance that General Practice is fundamental to the state’s healthcare system.

RDAQ’s paper asserts rural General Practice requires increased recognition and support, as well as new ways of thinking, multidisciplinary models of service delivery, and approaches to training and retention, to enable its viability and sustainability into the future.

It follows the release of the Miles Government’s \$1billion [Women and Girls’ Health Strategy 2032](#) earlier this week which proposes nurse-led walk-in women’s health hubs across Queensland, amongst other important measures.

RDAQ President Dr Alex Dunn said the Women’s & Girls’ strategy was a great starting point, but General Practice is the essential link that would strengthen and broaden its reach and effectiveness.

“General Practice is a distinct form of care that acts as a *pillar of our health system* to deliver wellbeing and improved health outcomes for our rural and remote communities,” Dr Dunn said.

“Government policies should recognise that General Practice is team-based care and, practice-based nurses, allied health, and administrative colleagues are essential, along with partnerships with community-based and hospital services,” he said.

“Thriving General Practice with GPs acting as care co-ordinators to ensure expert advice is delivered as close to home and on Country as possible, ensures individuals and communities stay healthy and keeps the hospital system functioning at its best.”

RDAQ’s Remote & Rural General Practice Policy Position asserts all levels of government have an obligation to contribute to equity of access to General Practice in rural and remote communities. It presents rural doctors’ key principles to address inequities in access to General Practice, including:

- Propagating consistent and positive messages regarding the central role of General Practice in rural and remote settings through education, experiences and exposures that are constructive and supported,
- Calling for positive messaging from the state’s health leaders and policy makers to recognise that General Practice is critically important to all Queenslanders, and that thriving General Practice ensures the hospital system can function at its best,
- Supporting and advocating for the development of attractive remuneration and training structures for doctors in rural areas, that have parity with hospital-based positions.

RDAQ’s position paper also highlights strategies to address challenges to remote and rural General Practice including closing the health gap for First Nations people, ensuring multidisciplinary care, boosting training and workforce initiatives, as well as funding and support mechanisms.

RDAQ Rural & Remote General Practice Peer Network Co-Chair and President-elect Dr Danielle Allan said delivering the best care to the patient was the overwhelming goal, and that would be best achieved through General Practice.

“General Practice has been calling out for funding for primary care nurses for a long time,” Dr Allan said.

“Utilising nurses to improve access to care is fantastic, but this care should always be in conjunction with, and coordinated through General Practice which can then refer patients on to non-GP specialties where needed.”

RDAQ’s Remote and Rural General Practice Position Paper can be found [HERE](#).