



**RDAQ 2026**

*Stockyards & Stethoscopes*

**MEDICINE IN THE HEART OF QUEENSLAND**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**22 June 2026**

### **Rural Doctors renew calls for PTSS reform ahead of annual conference**

Rural Doctors from across the state will unite to discuss key issues impacting the health of rural patients and communities at the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ) annual conference in Cairns this week.

RDAQ is the leading voice for rural doctors and communities, providing advocacy, education, networking, support and services across the state.

The organisation is renewing its call for genuine reform of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS), following the Queensland Government confirming a marginal increase to the fuel subsidy in this week's State Budget, while failing to address patient accommodation subsidies.

RDAQ President Dr David Walker said increasing travel expenses driven by the global fuel crisis, combined with longstanding gaps in the scheme, was placing essential healthcare further out of reach for rural and remote patients.

"Across rural and remote Queensland, patients are travelling vast distances to access specialist care, and the cost of that travel is rising rapidly," Dr Walker said.

"The PTSS was not keeping pace with real-world expenses, and an increase of 11 cents, to 45 cents per litre towards fuel costs falls well short of what's needed.

"The reality is many rural patients are being forced to dig even deeper into their own pockets or risk their health by going without care altogether.

"Postcode should never determine whether someone can access timely, life-saving treatment but for too many Queenslanders, it still does."

RDAQ's position was reinforced by a joint letter to the Queensland Health Minister, backed by a coalition of health and community organisations, supporting the State Government's review of the scheme while calling for structural improvements to ensure lasting reform.

The letter highlighted the importance of embedding ongoing input from rural patients, clinicians and community representatives, including through the establishment of a permanent PTSS stakeholder reference group to guide policy, administration and implementation.

"We need a system that listens to the lived experience of patients and those delivering care in regional and remote communities," Dr Walker said.

“A permanent stakeholder reference group would be a practical, low-cost way to ensure reforms are not only implemented, but continue to evolve as pressures on rural families grow.”

“Without real action, the gap between support and reality will continue to widen,” he said.

The PTSS will be among several challenges facing rural patients and communities addressed at RDAQ’s renowned annual conference being held at Pullman Cairns International from Thursday 25 to Saturday 27 June.

The sold-out event will bring together rural doctors, students, advocacy and consumer groups, service providers and other stakeholders from across the state to progress solutions for strengthening healthcare in regional, rural and remote Queensland.

[View full conference program](#)

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Media – register your attendance [media@rdaq.com.au](mailto:media@rdaq.com.au)

*All media must sign in at registration desk on arrival*