

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

24 June 2024

### **Dalby doctor's quiet work recognised with top honour**

Longstanding rural GP Dr Robyn Keighran's dedication to rural medicine has been recognised with Honorary Life Membership of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ).

The honour was presented at the annual David Horn Memorial Gala Ball & Awards at the weekend, receiving a standing ovation in a room filled with her rural doctor peers and RDAQ past presidents as part of the organisation's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

"I can't believe it, I was very teary actually because it was quite unexpected," Dr Keighran said.

"I felt like no one was going to know me, I keep a low profile – I just do my bit, so I was lost for words," she said.

Dr Keighran becomes just the 13<sup>th</sup> RDAQ Honorary Life Member. She was an inaugural member of the organisation, attended the very first meeting held in Roma in 1989, has been Treasurer and has attended every AGM and conference since.

"RDAQ is like a big family, and I love the political aspect of it," Dr Keighran said.

"We really led the charge for doctors throughout all of Australia. I can remember having the first grant to get international graduates to the bush, that was just huge and it's still an ongoing issue.

"I encourage all students and training doctors to go bush. It's very special being a rural doctor – there's just nothing like it."

Dr Keighran was a GP in Dalby for 27 years, providing consistent care to the community and embedding herself and her family into the rural lifestyle.

RDAQ President Dr Danielle Allan said Dr Keighran was highly deserving of the honour.

"Honorary Life Membership is awarded to an RDAQ member who has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to rural or remote health and to the work of RDAQ and Robyn certainly fits that bill," Dr Allan said.

"She has served rural Queensland as a GP for over 40 years, much of that in her own general practice in Dalby, and now that she is semi-retired, she still locums in rural and remote areas," she said.

"Robyn epitomises what it is to be a rural doctor and this award recognises not only the care she has provided, but her personal contributions," Dr Allan said.

“She has delivered quiet, consistent and life-altering work to the communities she has served.

“Robyn has also been influential and instrumental within RDAQ and her commitment to our cause and vision for equitable healthcare for rural Queenslanders is to be commended.”

Other awards presented at the David Horn Memorial Awards included:

**Honorary Associate Membership, the David Horn Medal :**

**Ms Zena Martin**

Ms Zena Martin is the Deputy CEO of Health Workforce Queensland.

She began working with RDAQ in 2006 when she was appointed as RDAQ Conference Manager. While her role with Health Workforce Queensland has evolved and grown over time, she has always maintained a commitment to improving the quality of primary health care workforce supports and developments for remote and rural communities to address the maldistribution of health workforce and access to services.

**RDAQ Meritorious Service Awards (2 awards)**

**Dr Anna Carswell and Dr Leanne Browning**

Dr Anna Carswell works in Goondiwindi as a General Practitioner, Senior Medical Officer and Clinical Director of Training. Her dedication to policy development, furthering her knowledge through additional learning and delivery of medical education to junior doctors and students is unrivalled.

Dr Leanne Browning is a Paediatric Consultant Specialist who has provided paediatric services to Toowoomba, Charleville, Cunnamulla, Quilpie, Goondiwindi and Stanthorpe. She is a strong advocate for junior rural doctors, has always supported her Rural Generalist colleagues, and shown tireless commitment to growing the next generation of RGs.

**Outstanding Rural Generalist Trainee, The Denis Lennox Medal:**

**Dr Chantel van Werkum**

Chantel completed her training in Stanthorpe and has shown dedication and commitment to rural medicine. She actively participates in emergency and on-call rosters, private practice and extended speciality services, especially mental health and addiction medicine, as well as medical education.

**Backbone of the Bush (awarded by Health Workforce Queensland):**

**David O’Toole**

The Backbone of the Bush award celebrates the support, commitment and contributions provided by spouses and partners of rural medical doctors.

[Winners bios](#)

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RDAQ 35 Years

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