



Media Release

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Rural Generalist doctors finally to be allowed to provide care in Tasmanian hospitals

The Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania (RDAT) welcomes the Premier's announcement that Rural Generalist doctors will be allowed to practise in Tasmanian rural hospitals.

RDAT President Dr Ben Dodds, who met with Minister for Health Guy Barnett on the same issue last Monday in advance of the Mercury Bush Summit, said that RDAT had been one of the many voices advocating for this change over a long time.

"We are very pleased that Premier Rockliff has directed the Department of Health to allow Rural Generalists (RGs), which are GPs with additional advanced skill qualifications in areas such as obstetrics, anaesthetics, surgery, emergency, mental health and Indigenous health, to be engaged in North-West Hospitals and District Hospitals" Dr Dodds said.

"This change, once it is implemented by the Department, will increase the services available and improve the continuity of services available to many rural patients.

"Tasmania has been lagging behind other states in their utilisation of RGs, which has been very disappointing for the doctors currently training and working in our state, who have been unable to use the full scope of their skills locally, and have been forced to travel interstate for their skills to even remain current," Dr Dodds said.

"Given the chronic shortage of doctors in rural hospitals such as the Mersey Community Hospital and North West Regional Hospital and the current reliance on an expensive locum workforce, it has been extremely frustrating for us to have these great doctors, with the appropriate skill set for their communities, being completely under-utilised by our hospital system."

"We join with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), whose Tasmanian Regional Director of Training Dr Sally Street addressed the Mercury Bush Summit on this issue in front of the Minister last week, in thanking the Government for taking action to implement this solution to rural medical workforce shortages.

"This change will be far-reaching in its impact," Dr Dodds said. "Patients in the community will also see the benefit of greater access to GPs as RGs work across both general practice and hospital care."

"It will encourage our great local doctors currently training to be RGs to remain in Tasmania once they have completed their training; it will reduce the staffing pressure currently on our hospital system by allowing more doctors to work in them; and it will have the longer-term benefit of increasing the services and care available to rural, remote and Indigenous communities across Tasmania.

“We hope there is swift action from the Department to implement this change, and to see RGs working in our hospitals in the near future.”

[Click here for a high resolution photo of Dr Ben Dodds](#)

Click here for a photo of Dr Dodds meeting with Minister Barnett [link to be inserted]

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