



13 August 2024

Peak rural doctor conference to feature new National Rural Health Commissioner, Prof Jenny May

Rural Medicine Australia 2024

23-26 October, Darwin

<https://rma.acrrm.org.au/>

#RMA24

Rural Medicine Australia 24 (RMA24) will give delegates their first opportunity to hear from the newly appointed National Rural Health Commissioner Professor Jenny May, who will be delivering a keynote address at Australia’s largest gathering of rural doctors.

Co-hosted by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), RMA24 will welcome up to 1000 rural doctors, trainees, medical students and others at the Darwin Convention Centre from 23-26 October 2024.

RDAA President Dr RT Lewandowski said that Prof May demonstrates a history of contribution to rural health on a local, regional and national scale.

“We are very excited to be able to have Prof Jenny May address our delegates at RMA24,” Dr Lewandowski said.

“There is always much excitement among rural doctors around the appointment of the Commissioner, and we are really looking forward to hearing Prof May’s initial thoughts on where the role will be focussed during her term.

“Jenny is a previous recipient of RDAA’s Rural Doctor of the Year, which she was awarded for her contribution to rural health on a local, regional and national scale. She was also appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her significant service to rural communities and health. She is passionate about education, about empowering the rural health workforce to be able to train rurally, and has a long history of delivering on programs and projects benefitting rural health.”

ACRRM President Dr Dan Halliday, said that while Prof May was new to the appointment of National Rural Health Commissioner, she was a long-time champion of rural health, and in particular the issues affecting rural health workforce.

“Jenny comes to the Commissioner role with almost 40 years experience working in rural and remote communities, mostly in the New England area of NSW, but she has also worked in remote WA’s Pilbara region, the Northern Territory and two separate stints in remote communities in British Columbia, Canada.

“She is an ACRRM Fellow, holds an academic position with the University of Newcastle, where she has carried out research into to rural health workforce issues, and she also maintains an active clinical practice.”

Prof Jenny May said that while she was only in the very earliest stages of her appointment, she was looking forward to having the opportunity to address Australia's peak rural medical conference, and to not only share her initial thoughts, but also to engage with the delegates.

"I have an overriding passion for hearing the rural voice, and I am also deeply interested in looking at ways to build the rural health workforce across all members of the multidisciplinary team," Prof May said.

"I have been privileged to be the RDAA nominee to the Council of the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) and I have served in this role for 22 years, with a two-year term as Chair. I am grateful for the opportunity this role gave me to work on and learn about sector-wide advocacy and reform.

"I have been very fortunate to have a stimulating and varied career whilst always working in rural areas. Rural Programs have allowed me to be involved in research, teaching and supporting rural services whilst never having to give up my clinical practice. I am very keen to develop career pathways for others to benefit from, as I have benefited from them myself.

"I am excited about continuing on with the great work already under way from the Commissioner's office, including the rollout of the National Rural Generalist Program, and the development of the Maternity Services Framework, along with embracing the new challenges we will be tasked with achieving.

"I am looking forward to attending RMA24 as both the Commissioner, and as a delegate, and I hope to really gain from further insights from my colleagues and friends that I will bring to the role."

The RMA24 program has more than 100 educational sessions, keynote speakers, social events and practical workshops.

The RMA24 Conference themes are:

- **Build Up Clinical Knowledge:** clinical skills and knowledge updates across all areas of rural and remote practice.
- **Build Up Cultural Competence:** strengthening rural healthcare through inclusive practices and a greater understanding of cultural diversity.
- **Build Up Effective Communication:** maximising scope of practice and collaboration in rural healthcare teams
- **Build Up Health Ecologies:** examining environmental sustainability, public health, and rural healthcare delivery.
- **Build Up Resilience:** Strategies for building thriving rural communities through promoting holistic community well-being.
- **Build Up Innovation:** research projects working to improve health equity, access, and outcomes for rural and remote communities.

Media are welcome to attend most sessions at RMA24, but must pre-register in advance by contacting one of the RMA Media Team on the contact numbers below.

Find the program for RMA24 by [clicking here](#)

Find the keynote speaker list for RMA24 by [clicking here](#). (Check for ongoing updates))

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