

# Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce

PROGRESS UPDATE · OCTOBER 2024

## JOINT APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF RURAL GENERALIST MEDICINE AS A SPECIALISED FIELD OF PRACTICE

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) Review Panel, tasked by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) with responsibility for assessment of the joint application for Rural Generalist Recognition, are set to hand down their findings in the next few weeks. The RG Recognition Taskforce has been in discussion with the AMC and is very hopeful of a positive outcome.

The Joint Application of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) to the MBA is in its final stage and it is hoped that final determinations will be available by December.

The findings will draw on their review of the joint-application submissions, and the outcomes of their **national consultation**, conducted over 16 October through to 12 December 2023, and their subsequent stakeholder meetings.

The Review Panel, chaired by Prof Chris Baggoley, met with the RG Recognition Taskforce in July to discuss the consultation findings as well as a number of other stakeholder organisations that were considered to require follow up or more detailed discussions.

The AMC Review Panel's final report will be endorsed through AMC governance. The AMC will provide the report and its advice on the application to the MBA that will in turn make recommendation to the joint Health Ministers.

Should the Health Ministers recognise the new specialist field, this will be incorporated into the national law and included on the national register of specialties. Doctors with an approved Fellowship qualification in Rural Generalist Medicine will be able to apply for specialist registration in the new field.

The new National Rural Health Commissioner Prof Jenny May who commenced her role in September, has accepted the Taskforce's invitation to take on the role of group Chair. The Taskforce would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere thanks to her predecessor, Adjunct Prof Ruth Stewart for her leadership in seeing the Recognition through to its final stage.

In parallel with these events, the Taskforce has been seeking to progress wider system adjustments in anticipation of a positive outcome. The Taskforce had held positive meetings with senior representatives of most states and Territories to discuss the implications and opportunities for their respective industrial and clinical frameworks.

In association with the joint application, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia consultative project is exploring the potential scope for inclusion of Rural Generalist item numbers in the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS). The final report is due in the next few months.

### Background:

The Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce has been meeting regularly since 2019 to oversee the joint-application to the Medical Board of Australia (Medical Board) for recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine as a specialised field within general practice. It is chaired by the National Rural Health Commissioner and includes senior representatives of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

The MBA conducted an initial assessment and determined that a case had been established to progress the joint application to a Stage 2 Assessment to be conducted by the AMC. A further assessment determined that an Office of Impact Analysis Regulation Impact Study (RIS) would not be required in the process.

The three joint-applications can be viewed:  
[Stage 1 Application](#)  
[Stage 1 Additional Advice](#)  
[Stage 2 Application](#)

The Medical Board's overarching process and guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

For further information please contact the joint-application secretariat at [recognitiontaskforce@acrrm.org.au](mailto:recognitiontaskforce@acrrm.org.au).