

Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce

PROGRESS UPDATE · FEBRUARY 2025

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

The second and final stage assessment of the joint application to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) for Rural Generalist specialist recognition has been completed.

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) assessment found that the case had been established for recognition of RGM as a new field of specialty practice and on 20 December, following meeting with the AMC, the MBA advised that it had agreed to recommend that the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) approve Rural Generalist Medicine as a new field of specialty practice within the specialty of General practice.

Over the past few months, the AMC Review Panel, tasked by the MBA with responsibility for assessment of the joint application for Rural Generalist Recognition, have finalised their assessment report which supported the application as demonstrating a case for recognition. Their report has been endorsed through the AMC's Recognition of Medical Specialties Subcommittee (ROMSAC) and the Specialist Education Accreditation Committee (SEAC) and tabled with the Board of Directors.

The AMC presented the assessment report to the MBA along with the advice that the proposal demonstrates there is a case for RGM to be recognised as a new field of specialty practice.

Following from a recommendation from the MBA, any determinations of the Health Ministers Meeting would be expected in the first half of 2025.

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.

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 (RDAA) 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 2025.

Background:

The Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce has been meeting on a monthly basis since 2019 to oversee the joint-application to the MBA 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 findings of the Review Panel, chaired by Prof Chris Baggoley, 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 three joint-applications can be viewed:
[Stage 1 Application, 2019](#)
[Stage 1 Additional Advice, 2021](#)
[Stage 2 Application, 2022](#)

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.