



Media release
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New country option for WA medical interns in 2017

The Rural Doctors Association of Western Australia (RDAWA) has congratulated the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) on the creation of ten rurally-based medical intern placements for 2017.

Under the initiative, Bunbury and Albany Hospitals in 2017 will each receive five interns.

RDAWA Vice President, Dr Andrew Kirke, said the creation of rural placements has been the goal of several rural medical training organisations for many years. This is the first time that rural centres have become a year-long allocation in WA for interns.

"This will go a long way to addressing the gap in the rural medical training pathway in WA — a gap which currently exists between the graduation of medical students from university and their entry to specialist training programs" Dr Kirke said.

"Addressing this gap will enable medical students to directly choose a rural pathway, and in doing so help to build WA's future rural medical workforce.

"RDAWA has long called for, and supported, measures that enable the development of locally-trained rural medical graduates to serve WA's many rural communities.

"The past decade has seen substantial progress towards the goal of a rural training pathway in WA, with the development of Rural Clinical Schools through the Universities' medical schools, and the expansion of rural opportunities for rural GP and rural generalist training through the general practice colleges, RACGP and ACRRM.

"This latest development of rurally-based intern allocations addresses a long-recognised hurdle in the continuity of rural medical training. RDAWA remains an advocate for all rural doctors in WA, and supporting our new medical graduates and trainees is the path to securing a stronger and more sustainable rural medical workforce for the future.

"The creation of rurally-based junior doctor training opportunities means that more of WA's medical graduates can opt for a career in rural medicine at an earlier stage.

"As a wealth of research has shown, the more exposure to rural experience that medical students and junior doctors receive, the more likely they are to return to country communities to work.

"The creation of ten rural allocation intern positions means that new medical graduates can choose a rurally-based career option from day one of their medical career. When this is linked in with their subsequent specialisation training, the likelihood that they will stay in rural medicine is greatly increased.

"RDAWA hopes that this development will lead to further allocations in rural areas around Western Australia for interns and other junior doctors in the near future."

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