



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care

The Hon. Mark Coulton MP
Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

30 April 2021

More GPs for rural areas increases access for patients in the bush

Increasing numbers of doctors are training to become GPs in regional, rural and remote areas, which will deliver significant benefits to patients and communities in the bush.

The Australian Government's 2021 Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program selection process has seen the largest number of acceptances – 1,434 doctors – in several years, more than 100 additional doctors than last year's intake.

Of these, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine is allocated 150 training places, and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is allocated 1,350.

Federal Regional Health Minister, Mark Coulton said almost 700 of these doctors will undertake their training in regional, rural and remote locations across the country.

"The evidence does tell us that if you train in the regions you are likely to stay in the regions and that's why we are focused on supporting the rural training pipeline," Minister Coulton said.

"Rural and remote communities want safe and high quality primary healthcare services delivered by well-trained GPs with training in an extended rural skill set.

"Through work which is underway on long-term workforce and training reforms we want to look at opportunities to provide greater supervision and support for doctors and practical ways to build a sustainable and highly trained medical workforce."

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt, said the Australian Government is strongly committed to bridging the city-country divide in providing health services to all Australians, by continuing to build the rural medical training pipeline.

"The AGPT Program is a central element in this and this latest intake means more doctors studying, training and working in regional, rural and remote locations," Minister Hunt said.

Minister Coulton said the Federal Government understood that doctors who study and train in rural locations are more likely to choose to work and live there permanently, enjoying the benefits of a rural lifestyle.

"These high acceptance numbers show the AGPT program is working, with particular benefits for communities who may struggle to attract a GP," Minister Coulton said.

The AGPT Program is for doctors interested in training to become a GP in Australia. Doctors can be placed anywhere – in cities or regional, rural and remote areas. Most successful applicants in this latest intake have already started training, with the rest to start in the next three months.

Media contact: Steph Nicholls 0417 314 920 steph.nicholls@regional.gov.au