

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the seventh Strategic Plan of the NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN). This document provides an integrated planning framework for RDN for the period 2013–2016 and delineates its core business activities, which are further articulated in the annual Business Plans.

This plan:

- defines the goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes for the three year period
- in conjunction with the annual Business Plan, ensures an integrated mechanism for the fulfilment of RDN obligations to state and national funding bodies.

RDN is a not-for-profit and non-government organisation, which is designated by the Australian Government as the Rural Workforce Agency (RWA) in New South Wales. RDN aims to ensure that the highest possible standard of healthcare is available to remote, rural and regional communities through the provision of a competent and continuing medical and health workforce. This workforce includes permanent, locum and outreach placements.

The difficulties of attracting and retaining medical and health practitioners to rural and remote areas have been well-documented and governments have introduced a range of initiatives aimed at overcoming the perceived barriers to remote and rural practice. RDN administers many of these initiatives for governments in New South Wales and also develops its own programs.

While RDN is funded specifically to assist with the recruitment and retention of medical and health professionals, it recognises that practitioners work within a wider healthcare team in a community setting and, wherever possible, RDN operates in a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative manner with other healthcare professional groups and communities. An example of this is RDN's administration since 2002 of Australian Government programs to increase access for remote, rural and Aboriginal peoples to health outreach services.

Dr Ian Cameron
Chief Executive Officer
NSW Rural Doctors Network

RURAL AND REMOTE POPULATIONS IN NSW

Rural and remote populations supported by RDN comprise those persons living in geographical locations in New South Wales that fall outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains.

ROLE OF THE NSW RURAL DOCTORS NETWORK

RDN plays a vital role in improving patient care and health status in rural New South Wales communities. Conceptually, RDN can be seen as being at the centre of a pentagon¹, harnessing the efforts of:

1. Policy makers (governments and departments)
2. Health providers (medical and other health practitioners)
3. Health service organisations (rural Local Health Districts, rural Medicare Locals, Aboriginal Medical Services, hospitals and other local health services)
4. Communities
5. Academics.

In this way, RDN value-adds and helps target existing resources to achieve negotiated, integrated and productive outcomes in health service provision for remote, rural and regional communities across New South Wales.



¹The RDN pentagon diagram was developed by RDN CEO Dr Ian Cameron and builds upon Towards Unity For Health concepts.

NSW RURAL DOCTORS NETWORK } STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 – 2016 }





NSW RURAL DOCTORS NETWORK

PURPOSE

Improve access to quality healthcare for people in remote, rural and regional New South Wales*

GOALS

- Support the provision and maintenance of adequate numbers of high quality healthcare professionals to improve patient care and health status in rural New South Wales
- Facilitate vertical and horizontal integration of health service providers to achieve improved health outcomes for rural New South Wales communities

*Unless otherwise stated, the term "rural" denotes remote, rural and regional New South Wales locations in Australian Standard Geographical Classification - Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) 2-5.

