

RURAL GENERALIST RECOGNITION TASKFORCE

PROGRESS UPDATE · JANUARY 2022

JOINT-APPLICATION TO THE MEDICAL BOARD OF AUSTRALIA FOR RECOGNITION OF RURAL GENERALIST MEDICINE AS A SPECIALISED FIELD

The Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce has been meeting on a monthly basis since 2019 to oversee the application to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) for recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine as a specialised field within general practice. It is chaired by the National Rural Health Commission and includes senior representatives of the RACGP and ACRRM.

- In November 2021, the MBA sent advice that the ACRRM-RACGP joint-application for recognition had been considered and that the Board had been determined that a case had been established for the joint-application to be progressed to the Stage 2 (detailed) Assessment.
- Both the process for a detailed assessment of a new specialty and the associated requirements to do this in conjunction with the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR), are new and untested. Meetings have been held with the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and the Commonwealth Department of Health to clarify the impending processes. The Taskforce has been advised that the Stage 2 assessment may take from 12 to 18 months.
- It needs to be determined whether the process will require a Regulatory Impact Study (RIS) in association with the OBPR. This is a predominantly financial assessment of whether the proposed regulation change would have negative community impacts. The Taskforce is currently working with the MBA to finalize an application to the OBPR to determine whether this will be required.

Other key developments include:

- The National Rural Generalist Strategic Council establishment in July 2021. This continues to meet to progress the broader national agenda of the National Rural Generalist Pathway (NRGP). It is chaired by the National Rural Health Commissioner and includes the GP colleges, the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), jurisdictional health services representatives and other key peak bodies.
- The National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021-31 released in January 2022. This incorporates the Rural Generalist workforce in its planning and action priorities and includes the Collingrove definition of a Rural Generalist.

The Taskforce continues to meet regularly to progress its application and related issues.

BACKGROUND

- The Specialist Recognition application process involves a Stage 1 (initial) assessment, and if successful, progresses to a Stage 2 (detailed) assessment and may also include a RIS conducted by the OBPR. More information [here](#).
- The Stage 1 joint-application was submitted by the two GP colleges to the MBA in December 2019. The application's assessment was conducted by the Australian Medical Council (AMC).
- The MBA sent advice in August 2020. This requested another national consultation and further research, actions, and information. An Additional Advice paper documenting this further work was submitted to the MBA in July 2021.
- Over this time, the Taskforce engaged with key bodies, including all medical specialties, NACCHO and other peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, jurisdictional departments of health, medical schools, junior doctor groups and other key health professional bodies to discuss the proposal and its implications.
- The letters of support received and submitted for the joint-application, included correspondence from representatives of jurisdictional health departments, key medical colleges, Australian Medical Students Association (AMSA) and the National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN), CRANaplus, medical schools, the AMA, the RDAA, the RDAA Specialists Group, the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), the Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), the RFDS, the National Farmers Federation, and the Australian Local Government Association.

For further information or assistance, please contact the joint-application secretariat at recognitiontaskforce@acrmm.org.au.