



Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

12 August 2011

Dear Secretary

Review of the Professional Services Review (PSR) Scheme

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Review of the PSR Scheme*.

Rural medicine is an often demanding and specialised medical discipline with broader challenges than simply those imposed by the content of each patient presentation. Higher-level clinical decisions need to be made and greater responsibility has to be taken when working in isolation away from professional supports and major centres, and with limited local availability of diagnostic and other health facilities.

In addition, rural doctors in smaller rural towns are generally expected to provide full-time primary (practice-based) and secondary (hospital-based) level services. This imposes significant demands on practitioners and their families, impacting on workload, professional responsibilities and lifestyle. These demands are exacerbated by a chronic shortage of appropriately trained general practitioners and specialist medical practitioners across rural and regional Australia.

In view of the uniqueness of rural practice, and the particular challenges associated with rural medicine, RDAA believes that doctors who have substantial experience in rural medicine and/or who are currently practising rural medicine should be appointed to the Professional Services Review Panel. RDAA also believes that all Professional Services Review Committees appointed to review and investigate the provision of services by a rural doctor should include panel members who have substantial experience in rural medicine and/or who are currently practising rural medicine.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 6239 7730.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Johnson
Chief Executive Officer