

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

*Inquiry into the factors affecting the supply of health services and medical professionals in rural areas.*

*As the General Manager of a remote council, Balranald Shire, I feel I have an insight to offer. This Shire has had the fortune to have secured the services of a foreign trained doctor and he has been with us for about 8 years.*

*Council has provided a modern brick home at no rental.*

*There are subsidies paid to encourage the doctor to provide certain services to the elderly which have no effect, Council has ended up paying a "fee" to get the doctor to visit the aged care facility and provide ongoing care. This area needs review.*

*This town also has two other doctors one of whom is a OTD who has not been able to get through the english requirements and another who gave up medicine because professional support was not provided when a crisis occurred.*

*It seems in this instance the system is the problem not a shortage of doctors.*

*ASGC-RA is not working to deliver incentives where they are most needed. The scheme needs to be more generous as doctors get further from centres with:*

- 1. Other doctors to network with*
- 2. Other doctors to share on-call work load*
- 3. Professional training facilities*
- 4. Regular passenger aircraft services*

*I have had person experience with major surgery in Melbourne and Sydney in the past 2 years and would comment that the relationship between rural GP's and city specialists appears quite good.*

*Getting sufficient nursing staff appears to be problematic in our area. The marketing of community life may be one way around this. We have hosted many medical students in the 7 years I have been in Balranald and most have enjoyed the experience. Those who come from a rural background are more likely to take up a rural practice.*

*I have a friend who is a doctor and her son trained as a doctor in Townsville under the remote entry scheme. He will go on to practice in a rural area. This scheme works and bears further investigation to validate such anecdotal evidence.*

*Chris Littlemore  
General Manager  
Balranald Shire Council*

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