

3/09/2014

### **New program to support new doctors**

The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Shire of Kambalda has recently seen a significant increase in the number of general practitioners, with 18 new general practitioners commencing work since January 2013, and 39 currently practising in the area

This number has been the result of the work of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Kambalda General Practice Working Group (KBKGPWG), which includes a number of local stakeholders, as well as Western Australia's rural health workforce agency, Rural Health West.

With the support of this group, Rural Health West has led the development of a new support program, specifically for the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Kambalda doctors, with the aim of providing them with educational and professional support, as well as looking to provide families and children with local connections and support.

“The working group has been very aware of the need to ensure that new general practitioners to the area are welcomed and well supported,” Ms Belinda Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of Rural Health West stated.

“The recruitment efforts have been very successful at boosting the numbers of general practitioners in the towns, which is a great outcome for the local community. However this program aims to address the retention issues to ensure these doctors continue to stay long term and encourage trainee doctors to the region.”

The program, Forward to Fellowship, is being administered locally by a familiar face, Dr Phil Reid, a general practitioner who practiced in the town for 34 years and who is providing the educational support.

“I think this is a fantastic program, which will provide the new doctors with a great introduction to living and working in regional Australia. It can be a daunting thing, moving to a new town and starting at a new practice- there is a lot to take in. Hopefully this program will make the transition a lot easier.”

Wendy Duncan MLA, Member for Kalgoorlie and Chair of the KBKGPWG has welcomed the commencement of the Forward to Fellowship Program as a major milestone in providing a long term solution to general practitioner shortages in remote and regional Australia.

“Forward to Fellowship is an amazing collaboration supported by the leadership in Kalgoorlie-Boulder and I am delighted to see this first phase achieved.”

**ENDS**

**Media Invitation – Photo Opportunity:**

The first session of the Forward to Fellowship Program will be held on Thursday 4 September from 6.30pm at The Rural Clinical School, located at the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital, St Alban's Road, Kalgoorlie.

Rural Health West would like to invite the Kalgoorlie Miner to attend for a photo opportunity. Dr Phil Reid, Ms Wendy Duncan MLA and the participants of the program will be available at 6.30pm for a formal photograph.

If you would like any additional information about this program, please contact the Rural Health West Communications and Marketing Manager as per the details below. Please also advise if you are able to accept the invitation to attend.

**Further enquiries:**

**Clare Underdown, Communications and Marketing Manager                      0477 313 959**

As the leading rural health workforce agency for Western Australia, Rural Health West is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments responsible for the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled sustainable health workforce to meet the needs to rural and remote Western Australians communities.