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Rural Health West plays ball to benefit rural communities

Every year Rural Health West sends currently practising country doctors an Annual GP Survey. This is an opportunity for them to provide beneficial feedback to the organisation. This data is used by Rural Health West to inform Australian and State Government agencies of gaps and trends, in order to be able to support needs analyses and influence workforce planning, reform and policy for the benefit of country patients and communities.

Over 900 surveys were distributed across Western Australia in September 2015. The data from the surveys that were returned in the following months has since been recorded and analysed. To encourage doctors to complete and return their survey, Rural Health West offered to contribute one sports ball per survey to benefit a rural community. In December 2015, a total of 750 new sports balls were provided to several not-for-profit regional organisations that help promote a healthy lifestyle and education through the use of sport.

“The information provided in the surveys from rural general practitioners is incredibly valuable and helps provide bespoke services and programs that retain our much needed medical workforce. The returned surveys will not only impact workforce policy but also improve the health and wellbeing of children in Western Australian communities,” said Ms Belinda Bailey, Rural Health West Chief Executive Officer.

Rural Health West provided 50 footballs, 50 basketballs and 50 soccer balls to Fair Game, a charitable organisation that inspires healthy communities through recycled sports equipment.

“The sports balls will be used to assist our programs in the Kimberley and Pilbara region to promote healthy activity amongst young children in underserved communities, including Indigenous Australians and migrants groups’,” stated Dr Robert Henderson, Fair Game Recycle and Donate Coordinator.

A further 150 balls were provided to Nyoongar Wellbeing and Sports for use in their holiday programs which incorporate activity, mentoring, health and education. A total of 450 balls, including netballs, basketballs, soccer balls, footballs and rugby balls were provided to Ngurra Kujungka Inc. who provide a range of sport and recreation related opportunities that deliver broad outcomes for the people of the Western Desert.

Rural Health West would like to thank the doctors who returned their Annual GP Survey 2015 and encourage all doctors to participate in future surveys. The information received is crucial in helping the organisation influence government about the needs of rural medical practitioners, for the benefit of their patients and communities.

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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.