

Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce

PROGRESS UPDATE · DECEMBER 2024

JOINT APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF RURAL GENERALIST MEDICINE AS A SPECIALISED FIELD OF PRACTICE

The second and final stage assessment of the joint application to the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) for Rural Generalist specialist recognition has been completed. It has found that the case had been established for recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine (RGM) as a new field of specialty practice.

Over the past few months, the Australian Medical Council (AMC) Review Panel, tasked by the MBA with responsibility for assessment of the joint application for Rural Generalist Recognition, have finalised their assessment report which supported the application as demonstrating a case for recognition. Their report has been endorsed through the AMC's Recognition of Medical Specialties Subcommittee (ROMSAC) and the Specialist Education Accreditation Committee (SEAC) and tabled with the Board of Directors.

The AMC will be presenting the assessment report to the MBA this month along with the advice that the proposal demonstrates there is a case for RGM to be recognised as a new field of specialty practice.

The MBA will make a decision on whether to recommend recognition of RGM to the Ministerial Council. Any determinations of the Health Ministers Meeting would be expected in the first half of 2025.

Should the Health Ministers recognise the new specialist field, this will be incorporated into the national law and included on the national register of specialties. Doctors with an approved Fellowship qualification in RGM will be able to apply for specialist registration in the new field.

In parallel with these events, the Taskforce has been seeking to support wider system adjustments in anticipation of a positive outcome. The Taskforce had held positive meetings with senior representatives of most states and Territories to discuss the implications and progress opportunities for their respective industrial and clinical frameworks.

In association with the joint application, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) consultative project is exploring the potential scope for inclusion of Rural Generalist item numbers in the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) that will enhance rural patients access to services. The final report is due in early 2025.

Background:

The Rural Generalist Recognition Taskforce has been meeting on a monthly basis since 2019 to oversee the joint-application to the MBA for recognition of Rural Generalist Medicine as a specialised field within general practice. It is chaired by the National Rural Health Commissioner and includes senior representatives of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

The MBA conducted an initial assessment and determined that a case had been established to progress the joint application to a Stage 2 Assessment to be conducted by the AMC. A further assessment determined that an Office of Impact Analysis Regulation Impact Study (RIS) would not be required in the process.

The findings of the Review Panel, chaired by Prof Chris Baggoley, draw on their review of the joint application submissions, and the outcomes of their national consultation, conducted over 16 October through to 12 December 2023, and their subsequent stakeholder meetings.

The three joint-applications can be viewed:
[Stage 1 Application, 2019](#)
[Stage 1 Additional Advice, 2021](#)
[Stage 2 Application, 2022](#)

The Medical Board's overarching process and guidelines can be viewed [here](#).

For further information please contact the joint-application secretariat at recognitiontaskforce@acrrm.org.au.