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MEDIA RELEASE

ACRRM RECEIVES AMC ACCREDITATION – A NEW ERA IN AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL EDUCATION

The Australian Medical Council has granted Initial Accreditation of the training and education programs of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), heralding a new era in education for rural medical practice in Australia.

The AMC's accreditation of ACRRM's programs meets the requirement set for recognition of the discipline of rural medicine within Medicare legislation, as announced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in July last year. This paves the way for the regulation changes within the Health Insurance Act, to take effect by 1 April this year, to create a list of ACRRM Fellows for the purposes of Vocational Recognition.

This also provides an alternative VR endpoint for doctors training for a career in general practice, with the ACRRM Fellowship providing graduates with the skills and competencies to work anywhere in Australia, rural or metropolitan.

ACRRM President, Dr David Campbell, said ACRRM's achievement in gaining AMC Initial Accreditation, combined with the COAG recognition from July last year, marks a new era in medical education for rural practice in Australia.

"ACRRM's training programs and assessment for Fellowship, now accredited within the system, have been designed to prepare doctors to feel competent and confident to work across the range of rural practice environments, as well as in metropolitan general practice.

"This decision represents a major milestone in the history of the medical profession in Australia. Not only does this decision bring about recognition of the discipline of rural medicine as a generalist discipline within the Australian health system, but it is also the first time an alternative provider in a particular field of practice has gained accreditation.

"ACRRM is already engaged in advanced discussions with the Australian General Practice Training Program regarding the delivery of the ACRRM program, Registrar selection, and implementation of our assessment program, etc.

"The decision to accredit ACRRM's programs, and to allow our own register of rural doctors for vocational registration, will provide greater flexibility and transportability for rural practitioners who will be able to practice in any part of Australia while receiving the benefits and rebates of VR doctors."

"Additionally, Fellowship of ACRRM (FACRRM) will increasingly be used by Fellows as a tool for clinical privileging and credentialing, and the overall status of FACRRM will also increase, encouraging more medical students and registrars to consider a career in rural medicine."

Cont.

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Dr Campbell said the decision would directly improve the workforce shortage suffered in Australia's regional and rural communities, by providing a new stream of doctors emerging from a dedicated rural vocational training pathway.

"Until now there has been no specific skills training in all the areas needed by rural practitioners, but the ACRRM pathway prepares doctors to meet the needs of rural communities via its 4 year training program and curriculum, and ongoing Professional Development Program."

"As Australia's leading organisation for rural medical training, ACRRM is the most appropriate body to ensure rural doctors have the range of skills required for rural practice.

"For this reason ACRRM celebrates this decision, and the creation of a register specifically for FACRRM doctors, finally giving rural doctors the recognition and rewards they deserve, as well as leading to improved health care for regional and rural Australians."

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