



MURRAY CITY
COUNTRY COAST
GP TRAINING



MEDIA RELEASE

April 5, 2019

GP CRISIS – RELIEF IN SIGHT

Where: Bus tour - Castlemaine, Kyneton, Maryborough and Newstead
When: Saturday 6 April 2019
Time: 9 am to 2.30 pm

In response to the growing regional GP crisis across Victoria, a group of professionals has collaborated to proactively host a 'GP Jaunt' tomorrow, Saturday 6 April, which takes in towns across Central Victoria.

Leading the initiative are [Monash University North West Victorian Regional Training Hub](#), [Murray City Country Coast \(MCCC\) GP Training](#) and Castlemaine GP, Dr Mark Farrugia.

The jaunt is a guided bus tour for junior doctors and medical students, to hear about place-based GP training pathways and advanced skill opportunities, in a bid to engage them to take up training; and stay and practice in the region.

Dr Mark Farrugia, who leads the tour says he has invited interested interns, medical students and junior doctors from across the state.

“Come and find your passion and place as a rural GP as we tour Central Victoria by mini-bus to visit local health services and clinics in the towns of Castlemaine, Maryborough, Newstead and Kyneton.

“We hope the GP Jaunt entices junior doctors to come to Central Victoria for the training and work opportunities and stay for the lifestyle.

“This place-based tour will connect you with some of the region's established medical fraternity, enable you to see first-hand the facilities and learn about the stimulating caseloads and practices,” said Dr Farrugia.

Dr Mani Thomas, Director, Monash University's North West Victorian Regional Training Hub, said that the trip highlights the region's great lifestyle, thriving food and wine businesses and arts scene, environmental culture and cosmopolitan vibe.

“We show why Central Victoria is one of Australia's most desirable locations for doctors to consider training and practicing in. We explore some smaller towns and hear from local leaders at the community gardens in innovative Newstead – hearing about the region's diversified economy, supportive community, affordable housing and emphasising the support available for junior doctors.

“Both Monash and MCCC are excited about collaborating on place based learning pathways - the GP Jaunt coincides with the recent 27 March announcement of the Australian Government's \$62.2 million 2019-20 Budget investment over four years to fast track the [National Rural Generalist Pathway program](#) and the release of the Victorian Strengthening Rural Generalist Training Strategy.”

Dr Shaukat Bashir, a third year doctor at Bendigo Health and participant on last year's GP Jaunt said the jaunt was extremely worthwhile.

"By attending, I gained an understanding of the various facilities available in different practices and how GP practices work in close collaboration with the regional hospitals. The best part of the event was the opportunity to meet amazing doctors working as advanced skills GPs in Castlemaine, Maryborough and Kyneton and to see where and how they work," said Dr Bashir.

Dr Britnee Hodge, an RACGP trainee working at Bendigo Health this year, reaffirmed this.

"I enjoyed seeing a bit more of the towns/communities the GPs live and work, it's an event I'd definitely recommend to others considering advanced GP pathways," said Dr Hodge.

Ms Lyn Marie Richards, Registrar Education and Practice Support Coordinator, MCCC, said the jaunt is a fantastic concept.

"We value strongly the opportunity to partner with both Monash Rural Health's Regional Training Hub and Bendigo Health to support the next generation of doctors find their place.

"As our role is to train the GPs of the future, we are so pleased to be involved in this initiative and to look at innovative ways to address the rural GP workforce shortage," said Ms Richards.

The GP Jaunt, coordinated by Dr Mark Farrugia, Monash University's North West Victorian Regional Training Hub and Murray City Country Coast GP Training (MCCC), is also supported by Bendigo Health.

These organisations are planning to continue working together to profile other similar local opportunities across the region to address the shortage of rural GPs.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

For photographs on Saturday 6 April in Castlemaine, Kyneton, Maryborough or Newstead, contact:

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