

## Media release

23 February 2026

# New medical school? Great. But let's not train another workforce for Adelaide.

**The Rural Doctors' Association of South Australia (RDASA) has welcomed the announcement of a proposed \$13 million medical training investment in Mount Gambier but says bricks and mortar alone will not solve rural workforce shortages.**

**RDASA President Dr Bill Geyer** said the Labor Party election promise has strong potential for the Limestone Coast and regional South Australia, provided it forms part of a genuine end-to-end rural training pathway.

"RDASA welcomes this announcement and supports the State Government's efforts to create end-to-end training pathways in rural South Australia," **Dr Geyer said.**

"However there also needs to be adequate support for supervisors in rural areas to be able to support rural training throughout the medical student phase, as well as a junior doctor's prevocational years.

"Alongside the creation of any new medical school there also needs to be increased support for the clinicians working in the hospital and the already overstretched GPs in Mount Gambier to ensure students receive high-quality training and have a positive experience of working in the country."

"Without proper investment in supervision capacity and protected teaching time, new training programs risk placing further strain on already stretched rural services," Dr Geyer said.

He also warned that unless the announcement is matched with funding for rural prevocational positions, advanced skills training for Rural Generalists and regionally based non-GP specialty pathways, the state risks repeating a familiar pattern.

"If we only invest in medical school places without strengthening the rest of the rural training pipeline, we may once again be training a workforce that ultimately relocates to Adelaide or interstate."

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) echoed RDASA's position, saying sustained investment across the entire training continuum is essential to improving regional healthcare access and relieving pressure on metropolitan hospitals.

**RDAA President Dr Sarah Chalmers** said governments must look beyond headline announcements.

"Every government loves a good shovel turn on a new medical school around election time," **Dr Chalmers said.**

“But to be serious about strengthening rural healthcare and easing the burden on Adelaide hospitals, investment must flow across the full medical training continuum, not just one part of it. End-to-end rural training pathways are the key to increasing access to high-quality medical services in regional communities.

“We know if we train doctors rural, they are far more likely to choose rural for their career, but that requires supporting them from medical school, through hospital training, into advanced skills and specialty pathways, all based in the regions.”

Both organisations said that when properly structured, regional medical training expansion can be transformative, but only if workforce, supervision and career pathways are strengthened alongside new infrastructure.

“Done properly, this investment could help build a sustainable rural workforce for the Limestone Coast and rural South Australia more broadly,” Dr Geyer said.

“But it must be more than a new school and part of a genuine rural training strategy.”

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