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GOOD RURAL HEALTH POLICY A VOTE-WINNER
AMA Rural Health Issues Survey 2016

The AMA this week launched its *Rural Health Issues Survey 2016* to hear first-hand from rural doctors about the issues affecting their practices, communities, and patients, and the health policies they want to see from the major political parties at the upcoming Federal election.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, said today that the Survey is being promoted to AMA members and non-members across rural Australia to ensure broad feedback to inform AMA policy and to influence governments.

“People in rural, regional, and remote Australia face unique challenges in gaining easy access to high quality health services,” Professor Owler said.

“And the doctors and other health professionals who serve rural communities and patients have very different experiences to their city counterparts, especially with links to hospitals and other specialists, medical workforce and resources, and support services.

“Rural Australia requires specific and specialised health policies and funding to ensure rural patients are not disadvantaged in comparison to people living in cities.

“The AMA Survey will allow rural doctors to share their experiences and solutions, which in turn will help the AMA lobby governments for better policies.”

Professor Owler said the AMA Council of Rural Doctors drives the AMA’s strong policy agenda to promote improved access to health services in regional, rural and remote communities.

“Our last Rural Health Issues Survey was conducted in 2007, and it provided the framework for much of our rural health advocacy,” Professor Owler said.

“It allowed us to influence Government decisions on issues such as locum relief, medical workforce, specialist outreach, and patient assisted travel schemes. But new stresses and pressures have emerged over the last decade, and our policies must now respond to these changes.

“The best sources of information about what needs to be done to improve rural health and medical services are rural doctors and their patients.

“The 2016 Survey gives rural doctors a chance to tell the AMA their views, and to assist the AMA to work with the Federal and State Governments to develop policies that will make a real difference. Good rural health policies will win votes,” Professor Owler said.

The 2016 AMA Rural Health Issues Survey will be open until 29 April 2016, and can be accessed by clicking this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BNWFJQP>

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