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**NATIONAL RURAL GENERALIST PATHWAY WILL HELP IMPROVE
 MEDICAL WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the decision to fast track the introduction of the National Rural Generalist Pathway (NRGP) is an important step in implementing a broad strategy to improve the distribution of the medical workforce in Australia, with an emphasis on encouraging more doctors to live and work in rural and regional Australia.

The Minister for Regional Services, Sport, Local Government, and Decentralisation, Senator Bridget McKenzie, announced that the NRGPs will be fast tracked with \$62.2 million funding in next week’s Budget, building on the 100 NRGPs places announced in last year’s Budget and due to commence in 2021.

Dr Bartone said that the AMA has been a strong supporter of the NRGPs and contributed to its development, working closely with the National Rural Health Commissioner.

“Country Australians have lower life expectancy and worse healthcare outcomes on a range of key health indicators,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA has for many years been calling for significant new investment in rural health to support better access to medical care for people in rural communities.

“With medical graduate numbers in Australia at record numbers, well above the OECD average, we need to focus on how we improve the distribution of the medical workforce.

“Making the NRGPs a reality is an important step in helping to improve access to care for the seven million people who live in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

“The AMA will now work closely with the Government to implement the NRGPs.

“And we will continue to encourage further investment in rural health through initiatives such as rural GP infrastructure grants and significant additional rural medical specialist training places as key parts of an overall suite of measures to deliver more doctors and better health outcomes for rural communities,” Dr Bartone said.

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