

Monday 12 February 2024

## **JCU General Practice and Rural Medicine IMPORTANT PROGRAM CHANGES**

To our valued stakeholders,

**James Cook University (JCU) has made the difficult decision to conclude the delivery of General Practice (GP) registrar training under sub-contracting arrangements with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) that began as part of the transition to College-led training in 2023.**

**The shift to a College-led delivery model makes ongoing funding of JCU's training less secure. Our decision to move away from the training at this time has been taken to allow us to provide timely information and advice to our staff and stakeholders, allowing for an orderly transition to the new approach.**

Since 2016, JCU has been directly delivering GP training and has proudly produced over 900 GP Fellows of both Colleges who are now serving northern and regional Queensland and beyond. Following the national transition to College-led training over the past 12 months, we have been supporting progress towards nationally consistent training programs. In the future, formal training will be delivered by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), which brings regional Queensland in line with delivery across the rest of Australia.

There are continuing discussions around the realignment of JCU's longstanding and continuing involvement in the GP and Rural Generalist (RG) training and careers. As Australia's most successful university in producing medical graduates who become doctors who work in regional, rural and remote Australia, our focus and passion lies in building the GP and RG workforce of tomorrow, in and for the communities that need them most.

At the heart of our interest is the registrar's training experience, and we will be working closely with both ACRRM and RACGP to ensure a well-organised handover of training-related tasks with no disruption to registrars. As JCU and each of the Colleges have been working very closely together over the past twelve months - including in use of College learning resources and training management systems - we feel confident of a smooth handover.

As we work through the realignment of the JCU role and contribution, we are guided by:

- **Surety for GP registrars, practices and communities:** Regional Queensland communities, trainees, supervisors and JCU staff need confidence in training arrangements beyond June 2024.
- **The changing environment for GP/RG training.** Since the College-led training model was introduced in February 2023, JCU has continued to deliver GP/RG training in a sub-contracted arrangement supported by interim funding by the Australian Government until June 2024. With this funding now concluding, it is JCU's responsibility to work on the next phase of arrangements.
- **Continuing to add value to GP/RG training in northern Queensland.** A key feature of the JCU Model is our local presence in rural, remote and regional Queensland communities. This will not change as we continue in our undergraduate and Regional Training Hubs programs. As a leader in producing a work-ready rural medical workforce, we will continue to engage students and doctors across the medical training continuum, building the teaching, training and research capacity of community primary care and rural hospitals.
- **A great sense of pride in the impact we have made.** What has been achieved by JCU and our collaborators since 2016 is remarkable. The distinctive JCU Model of 'end-to-end' training starts at the beginning of medical school and goes through to specialist GP Fellowship and beyond. It is a model that works, with almost two-thirds of GP Fellows staying in the northern and regional Queensland region after completing their training.

JCU remains committed to integrated local community-based primary care training across regional Queensland, and will continue to work with Government and our stakeholders on options to expand the number of doctors and other professionals pursuing primary care careers in our region, which includes some of the most underserved communities in the country.

Throughout this process, are committed to providing clear and timely communication to all stakeholders in General Practice and Rural Medicine. If you have any questions, please contact our team at [gprm.operations@jcu.edu.au](mailto:gprm.operations@jcu.edu.au).

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Prof Richard Murray