

Community advantage

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The RACGP's Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice can help rural GPs better serve their communities.

FARGP registrar requirements

- Member of the RACGP
- Working towards RACGP Fellowship
- Enrolled with a General Practice Training Provider or Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS)
- Completion of the FARGP learning plan and reflection activity
- Twelve months in a rural general practice setting
- Twelve months of advanced rural skills training (ARST) in an accredited training post
- Six-month 'Working in rural general practice' community-focused project
- Completion of the FARGP emergency medicine activities, including satisfactory completion of two advanced emergency skills courses.

Visit www.racgp.org.au/education/fellowship/ruraladvantage for more information on the FARGP and the 'Give your rural community an advantage' campaign.

The RACGP's National Rural Faculty (NRF) is the largest rural general practice representative body of any Australian specialist medical college. It represents more than 12,000 students, registrars and GPs working in or towards a career in rural general practice.

'The main role of the NRF is to support rural and remote Australian GPs by advocating for things they feel passionate about, both in the general practice profession and the community,' Dr Ayman Shenouda, a rural GP and Chair of the NRF, told *Good Practice*.

'There is a lot of engagement with the community when you work in rural general practice.'

One of the key roles of the NRF is the administration of the Fellowship in Advanced Rural General Practice (FARGP). The FARGP is awarded in addition to RACGP Fellowship and is completed through the interactive learning program *gplearning*. It includes pathways designed for both general practice registrars and practising GPs (refer to breakouts on pages 10 and 12).

The FARGP aims to develop advanced skills and broaden options for safe, accessible and comprehensive care for Australia's rural, remote and very remote communities.

'Every day that you work in rural and remote general practice is a real challenge because of the nature of the patients that you see all the time,' Shenouda said. 'You are contributing to the community every day and your contribution is well acknowledged by the patients and the community.'

The NRF recently launched the 'Give your rural community an advantage' campaign, encouraging general practice registrars and new and eligible Fellows to enrol in the FARGP to gain additional rural skills to meet their communities' needs.

'The nature of rural general practice is that when a doctor goes to the community they quickly sense whether they need to upskill in specific areas. And once they decide there are skills they need in order to better serve their community, they can then go and upgrade their education to get the FARGP,' Shenouda explained.

'One of the really important things about the FARGP is that it is not just for registrars and young doctors, but it is also suitable for doctors who have been in the community for a long time. For these doctors, if there is a loss of any speciality, or there is a need in the community for a specific skill, they can apply.'

Registrar pathway

Dr Katie Williamson is a rural GP in the central NSW town of Mudgee. She has been a Fellow of the RACGP since 2012 and her FARGP was ratified by the RACGP Council in 2014. Despite her current interest in remote medicine, Williamson never imagined herself as someone who would 'live in the country' when she first graduated from the University of Sydney.

'As part of the university program, they required us to do some rural placement and I did that training in Murwillumbah [NSW],' she told *Good Practice*. 'As a result of that placement, I became very interested in rural health and



Left to right: NRF Chair Dr Ayman Shenouda encourages rural GPs to upgrade their skills with the FARGP; Dr Katie Williamson believes the FARGP helps rural communities by making GPs more confident in their skills.