

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-094

OUTCOME: 6 - Rural Health

Topic: National Advanced Rural Generalist Training Pathway

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Boyce

Question:

What progress is being made on the development of a National Advanced Rural Generalist Training pathway?

Answer:

The Department of Health is considering evidence emerging from state-based rural generalist programs, including those in Queensland, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia.

The most mature of these is the Queensland Rural Generalist Program (QRGP), which currently supports 232 participants. The then Department of Health and Ageing funded an evaluation of the QRGP in 2010, which was undertaken by Nova Public Policy Pty Ltd. The program was evaluated again in 2013 by Ernst & Young, with funding from Health Workforce Australia (HWA).

The Commonwealth contributes funding to state-based rural generalist programs for GP training through the Australian General Practice Training program. This program offers training in rural and remote locations as well as training in advanced skills, a key component of rural generalist training.

HWA has been working to develop a Rural Medical Generalist National Framework, drawing on existing rural generalist models within states and territories. HWA released a draft of the framework for public consultation between 5 June 2013 and 2 July 2013, and is currently reviewing the submissions received as part of the finalisation of the project.

The Department has funded two projects by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, to examine issues around streamlining training and education for medical students to enter general practice in regional and rural communities. The projects will also examine the structural requirements and advanced skills training required for new entrants and the existing rural general practice workforce. The projects are due to be completed in the first half of 2014.