

Tabled document no: 5

Portfolio: HEALTH & AGEING

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Date: 19/10/2011



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

4 September 2011

Labor Delivers Record Number of Doctors and Nurses to Regional Australia

A record number of doctors and nurses are delivering much needed health services to communities around regional Australia according to new Medicare data released today following the Gillard Government's historic investments in regional health.

The new 2010-11 Medicare statistics were released today alongside a Government-commissioned report by the National Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems (GISCA). This report examines the ASGC-RA classification system developed by the ABS that supports the Government's \$134m *Rural Workforce Strategy*, which forms part of the Government's regional workforce investments.

Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon welcomed the increases as evidence the Gillard Government's record investments in regional health—which in 2011-12 will exceed \$1.2 billion, a 150% increase from the last year of Howard Government—are making a real difference for families across regional Australia.

"This new data shows the Gillard Government's national health reform agenda is delivering more doctors, more nurses and better health outcomes for regional Australians," Ms Roxon said.

"Through national health reforms, our workforce training programs will deliver an extra 5,500 GPs, 680 specialists, and 5,400 junior-doctor-training places in general practice nationwide by 2020. At least half of these positions will be in regional areas.

"Almost 11,000 doctors are eligible for our GP rural incentives, and new Medicare data shows since the Rural Workforce Strategy began in 2010, the number of GPs working in regional Australia has increased by 4.4 per cent, more than double the rise in metropolitan areas.

"These first year results show our Strategy is already paying dividends in getting doctors into the bush.

"Getting doctors into the bush is never going to be an easy task, but these reports show our Government is helping to stop the rot from Tony Abbott's neglect of our rural workforce.

Medicare Statistics
GP Full-time Workload Equivalent (FWE) increase for regional Australia
2009-10 to 2010-11

State/territory	GP FEW increase 2009-10 to 2010-11
NSW	4.8%
Vic	4.9%
Qld	4.4%
SA	2.1%
WA	5.6%
Tas	2.6%
NT	6.4%
ACT	n/a
National	4.4%

Regional Australia is defined as ASGC-RA areas RA2 (Inner Regional Australia) to RA5 (Very Remote Australia).

ASGC-RA is a geographic classification system that was developed in 2001 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as a statistical geography structure which allows quantitative comparisons between 'city' and 'country' Australia.

The purpose of the structure is to classify data from census Collection Districts (CDs) into broad geographical categories, called Remoteness Areas (RAs). The RA categories are defined in terms of 'remoteness' - the physical distance of a location from the nearest Urban Centre (access to goods and services) based on population size.

Further information about the ASGC-RA is available from:

<http://doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/RA-intro>