

## New School of Rural Medicine ‘very, very good news’

For immediate use, August 28, 2017

The announcement that the Government will establish a new School of Rural Medicine within the next three years is “very, very good news for our country”, says New Zealand Rural General Practice Network Chief Executive Dalton Kelly.

“Rural New Zealand plays such an important part in the nation’s prosperity and we need to ensure that the people who live and work in rural New Zealand have the very best health services available and this initiative will contribute hugely to achieving that.

“We want to ensure that this new school is multi-disciplinary and not just for doctors but also for nurses, pharmacists, midwives, physios and in fact for all the health disciplines needed to ensure the first class delivery of health services in rural New Zealand.”

Mr Kelly says having focussed and well-supported rural health education programmes and pathways to ensure that enough doctors, nurses and allied health professionals are trained and are keen to live and work rural communities is a high priority if the health needs of rural communities are to be fulfilled.

“With approximately 600,000 New Zealanders living in rural communities and many of them providing the labour and skills that support the backbone of the economy, their health and wellbeing is essential.

“We support the establishment of a school of rural health with a specific rural training focus. The status quo is not filling the need for extra graduates for the rural sector and equitable provision of health services for rural people compared to their urban counterparts.

“With an ageing workforce of GPs – 40 percent due to retire in the next five to 10 years – and an over-reliance on recruiting International Medical Graduates (IMGs) we are now at break point in terms of the rural health workforce.”

For more information contact NZRGPN Chief Executive Dalton Kelly on 027 231 0067.

Note to editors: Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment Minister Paul Goldsmith announced today (August 28) that the Government will establish a new School of Rural Medicine within the next three years to produce more doctors for our rural communities.