



**Rural Doctors Association of Australia  
Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists  
NSW Rural Doctors Network**

Media Release

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## **Government Funding Supports Rural Obstetricians**

Following this week's budget announcement, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) and NSW Rural Doctors Network (NSW RDN, representing the rural workforce agencies) welcome and commend the Federal Government's funding of \$5.9 million for the Specialist Obstetricians Locum Scheme (SOLS) over the next three years.

The SOLS project aims to supply affordable, quality locum relief to rural specialist obstetricians and GP obstetricians, encouraging them to stay in country areas and continue to provide high quality obstetric services to rural and remote women. This follows the successful SOLS pilot study.

"SOLS was set up to help maintain access to quality obstetric care in non-metropolitan Australia by providing quality locum relief to the dwindling body of non-metropolitan obstetricians. This relief is an important factor in the willingness of doctors to undertake or remain in rural practice and we welcome this much-needed support from the Rudd Government" said RANZCOG President, Dr Christine Tippett.

SOLS aims to:

- maintain and improve the access of rural women to quality local obstetric care by providing the rural specialist obstetrician and GP obstetrician workforce with efficient and cost-effective locum support;
- improve the retention rates of rural obstetricians; and
- sustain safety and quality in rural practice by facilitating access to professional development and leave for rural obstetricians.

"Whilst this ongoing funding for SOLS will be welcomed by rural obstetricians it was less than originally proposed" said RDAA immediate past-President, Dr Ross Maxwell. "The next step is to ensure that the funding provided in the federal budget will in fact be sufficient for the SOLS program to achieve a level of locum coverage the government is hoping to achieve."

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