

**Media release  
28 September 2022**

## **Three lucky junior doctors on way to peak Rural Medicine conference thanks to bursary**

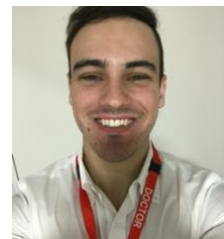
Three junior doctors are the lucky recipients of a national bursary being offered by MDA National and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) that will see them travel to the Rural Medicine Australia (RMA) conference in Canberra next month.

The **MDA National and RDAA #DestinationRural Bursary** is offered to seven junior doctors annually, with each receiving \$1500 to undertake a rural clinical placement, attend a rural health conference, or attend a skills workshop in a rural town.

Three bursaries were offered specifically for attendance at RMA22, which will be held in Canberra from 12-15 October.

### **The recipients are:**

**Dr Sam Hemer** – Sam is currently working as a Resident Medical Officer (RMO) in the Emergency Department at Mount Isa Hospital. Sam was raised near Coffs Harbour in rural NSW, and got a first glimpse at the rewarding nature of a rural medical career from a local doctor - who also introduced him to the bagpipes! Sam has since gone on to graduate as a doctor, and plans to work as a Rural Generalist doctor in the future, providing General Practice and anaesthetics care to a rural community. He has also kept up the bagpipes...and is proudly teaching a new generation of pipers the instrument!



**Dr Catherine Nortje** – Originally from Durban in South Africa, Catherine is currently working as an intern at Mount Isa Hospital in Queensland. Her appreciation for Rural Medicine began while undertaking several health and community projects while at high school in South Africa. Later at university in Cape Town, several rural clinical placements reaffirmed her involvement in Remote Medicine. Catherine has a strong interest in procedural medicine such as anaesthetics and emergency care and continues to explore the exquisite camping locations surrounding Mount Isa.



**Dr Isobel Pye** – Raised in the rural NSW town of Walgett, Isobel is currently working as an Unaccredited Dermatology Trainee at the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney. In 2023, she will commence GP training in rural Western NSW, with a view to becoming a rural GP with advanced skills in dermatology. Outside Medicine, Isobel is a keen equestrian and looks forward to returning to work and live in her hometown of Walgett.



**RDAA President, Dr Megan Belot, said:** "We warmly congratulate Sam, Catherine and Isobel on being selected as our Bursary recipients for RMA22, and thank MDA National enormously for their continued support of the Rural Doctors Association, our members and future rural doctors. We are certain that our Bursary recipients will greatly enjoy and

benefit from their attendance at RMA22, not only because of the many sessions we have on offer but also in being able to get to know the many rural doctors from across Australia who will be at the event. We look forward to seeing them there!”

**MDA National President, Dr Michael Gannon, said:** “In building the rural medical workforce, it is incredibly important that we provide as many opportunities as possible for junior doctors to spend time undertaking a clinical placement or skills training in a rural location, or even simply attending a rural health conference like RMA22 where they can talk with rural health professionals from across Australia.

“It is not uncommon for a junior doctor who has spent little, if any, time in rural Australia to come back from a rural placement wondering why they didn’t sample rural practice sooner – as they enjoyed it so much. Some are instant converts to Rural Medicine and go on to have a rewarding career as a rural doctor.

“MDA National is very pleased to be able to support this important Bursary, and hopefully help build the future rural medical workforce.”

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**Dr Sam Hemer, Dr Catherine Nortje and Dr Isobel Pye are available for interview.**

**A high resolution photo of Sam is available here:**

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/2145>

**A high resolution photo of Catherine is available here:**

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/2146>

**A high resolution photo of Isobel is available here:**

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/2147>

**Find more information about MDA National at [www.mdanational.com.au](http://www.mdanational.com.au)**

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