

Media release  
27 September 2022

## Health politics to feature strongly at Australia's biggest rural medical conference

Rural Medicine Australia 2022  
12-15 October 2022, Canberra  
<https://rma.acrrm.org.au>  
#RMA22

With the election of a new Federal Government, a critical shortage of rural doctors, and a conference in the nation's capital, this year's Rural Medicine Australia conference (RMA22) was always going to have a strong political flavour – and those attending this year's conference will not be disappointed.

### RMA22 will feature:

- **Keynote speeches** at the opening plenary of the conference (**8.30am, Thursday 13 October**) from the Federal Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, **Emma McBride MP**, and the Federal Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care, **Senator Anne Ruston**.
- **A Q&A session** with former Federal Health Minister, **the Hon Greg Hunt**, as part of the opening plenary session (**Thursday 13 October**). Mr Hunt will sit down with former RDAA President, Dr Adam Coltzau, to discuss issues like the frustrations of health in politics; COVID successes and failures; barriers to change; competing interests; who holds the power; and why rural inequity remains unresolved. No topic will be off the table and questions from the floor will be invited.
- An address by the **National Rural Health Commissioner, Professor Ruth Stewart**, as part of the morning plenary session on **Friday 14 October** (8.30am).
- The annual **RMA Presidents' Breakfast (7am, Friday 14 October)** – with the theme 'Change is Here' – where high profile medical leaders and senior health sector stakeholders will discuss the move to College-led GP training, medical culture, the rural medical workforce crisis, the need for more prevocational opportunities for junior doctors in the bush, and much more!

**RDAA President, Dr Megan Belot, said:** "Rural doctor colleagues I've spoken with have been really excited to come to Canberra for RMA22, as they know how critical federal politics is in shaping rural health policy. Decisions made at Parliament House in Canberra have a direct impact on whether doctors move to, or stay in, our rural and remote communities. We look forward to hearing from our past and present political leaders on what can be done to address the challenges we are facing...and to provide RMA delegates, who work at the coalface of rural healthcare, with the opportunity to share their concerns and solutions with federal policy-makers."

**ACRRM President, Dr Sarah Chalmers, said:** "We are at a truly pivotal moment in health politics, with a new Federal Government, a new approach in the way we train our future GPs and Rural Generalist doctors, and a real opportunity to encourage more doctors to consider careers in general practice and Rural Generalist practice...if the policy levers are right. There's a big opportunity to

deliver a positive and sustainable future for rural healthcare in Australia if our governments are prepared to make innovative decisions. We are really pleased to be providing sessions at RMA22 where our political leaders, medical leaders and wider rural medical community can connect and discuss innovative ideas to boost the future rural medical workforce.”

The Rural Medicine Australia (RMA) conference is convened by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA). Registrations for RMA22 are already above 750 attendees.

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Media are welcome to attend most sessions at RMA22, but must pre-register in advance by contacting one of the RMA Media Team on the contact numbers below.

**Find the full program for RMA22 by clicking here:**

<https://bit.ly/3d73ksG>

**Find the full keynote speaker list for RMA22 by clicking here:**

<https://rma.acrrm.org.au/program/speakers>

**A high resolution photo of Dr Megan Belot can be found here:**

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/2139>

**A high resolution photo of Dr Sarah Chalmers can be found here:**

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/1291>

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