

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Regionally trained doctors remain in rural areas

A recent study has shown that medical students who study at regionally based medical schools and regional universities are more likely to choose to work in rural areas.

The research paper published in the Australasian journal *Rural and Remote Health*, looked into where doctors worked after graduation from the University of Tasmania.

Medical students at the University of Tasmania spend the first three years of their degree studying in Hobart. To complete their degree students can choose to spend their final two clinical years in Hobart, Launceston or at the Rural Clinical School (RCS) based in Burnie on the North-West coast of Tasmania.

The study looked at the proportion of University of Tasmania RCS graduates currently working in rural areas in Australia compared to those who spent the final two years of their degree in Hobart or Launceston.

Research Co-Author Dr Lizzi Shires said that the research indicated that doctors are more likely to work in a regional area after graduation, if they spent the last year or two of their training in a rural area such as Burnie.

“The study adds to the growing evidence that training medical students in rural areas delivers graduates that work rurally,” Dr Shires said.

“This research clearly indicated that spending time studying at the Rural Clinical School significantly affected medicine graduates choices of where they worked in Australia over the first 3 years post-graduation.”

Dr Shires suggested that recently graduated doctors could be encouraged to stay in regional locations by giving them access to regional postgraduate specialty programs that allowed them to continue their professional training.

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