



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Mr Andrew Gee MP
Member for Calare
PO Box 673
Orange, NSW, 2800

27 June 2017

Dear Mr Gee

I write in response to your statement in Parliament on May 24 and the article that subsequently appeared in the *Central Western Daily* on May 28 ("Member for Calare blasts Sydney Uni for stalling regional medical school").

Of course, we share your desire for rural and regional communities to have access to the best possible healthcare through effective workforce development. However, I was surprised that you chose to characterise the University of Sydney as taking a "predatory and negative approach" to training the rural medical workforce.

Why you singled out the University of Sydney for criticism is a mystery. Every university with a medical school agrees the well-intentioned proposal to create yet another medical school will not solve the rural doctor shortage.

It is widely agreed that the most important factor in ensuring rural medical workforce needs are met is the existence of an adequate rural training 'pipeline', so that students wanting a rural career can obtain intern and residency jobs and also progress to postgraduate specialty training (including rural generalist training) in rural and regional sites.

The entrance to the rural medical-career pipeline is greatly oversubscribed. For example, there were more than six applications for every intern job commencing in 2017 at Dubbo Base Hospital and the Orange Health Service.

There is also a serious capacity deficiency further along the pipeline. Rural junior doctors need access to basic and advanced specialty training places, including places for general practice training in rural and regional sites so they don't need to drift to the cities for specialty training. These places are also in short supply.

The University of Sydney has publicly commended the federal government's excellent initiative in funding Integrated Regional Training Hubs, which will enable the establishment of basic and advanced medical training posts in rural centres, in collaboration with local health services and the specialist Colleges.

Furthermore, The University of Sydney has a longstanding and deep commitment to training the next generation of rural and regional healthcare workers, including doctors.

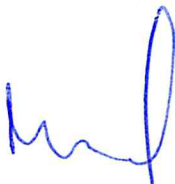
Our track record speaks for itself. By the end of this year, more than 800 medical students will have graduated from extended rural placements in the Orange and Dubbo campuses of our School of Rural Health.

Additionally, these campuses currently employ 43 people, who are deeply embedded in the local health system and communities.

In April, the University of Sydney won \$3 million in federal funding to establish Rural Training Hubs in Broken Hill, Dubbo and Lismore to boost rural-based training and career pathways for trainee doctors.

We look forward to enlarging the contribution we are making to further develop the Central West's medical workforce and to improving access to high quality healthcare across the region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Arnold', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

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