

1 November 2022

Rural psychiatry champion joins Rural Health West Board

Rural psychiatrist and advocate Associate Professor Matthew Coleman has joined the Rural Health West board following its recent Annual General Meeting.

Dr Coleman replaces outgoing director, Dr Andrew Kirke as a medical practitioner representative on the Board.

He brings a wealth of experience in rural and remote health practice and is an active clinical academic and researcher in the areas of mental health service delivery and rural health workforce.

Rural Health West Chair Tuck Waldron welcomed Albany-based Dr Coleman.

“Dr Coleman is extremely well respected within the rural health sector, both locally and nationally.

“He is Commissioner of the National Mental Health Commission representing rural and remote communities and clinicians for the past three years, and has contributed extensively to a number of national strategic health plans.

“Dr Coleman has been closely involved with the development of the rural training pathway for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and has been instrumental in a number of aspiring psychiatrists undertaking their training in rural WA.

“He has been a long-time supporter of Rural Health West through his involvement with our education and upskilling program and through the regional health professionals networks.

“Rural Health West has a 30-year track record of supporting country communities and is driven by the belief that everyone, everywhere is entitled to high quality healthcare.

“Dr Coleman’s involvement with the National Mental Health Commission, his work to develop rural training pathways and his own clinical practice demonstrate that his values and vision align very closely with that of Rural Health West.

“We are delighted to welcome him to the Board.”

Registered nurse and WA Centre for Rural Health mental health academic, Chantal Bachere was also elected to the Board, as the nursing and midwifery representative.

Ms Bachere had previously been appointed to the Board to fill a casual vacancy since December 2021.

Mr Waldron acknowledged Rural Health West's departing Deputy Chair, Dr Andrew Kirke, who has served on the Board since 2016.

"Andrew has provided excellent leadership to Rural Health West throughout his tenure on the Board.

"His deep understanding of the sector, as both a clinician and through his role as Head of The Rural Clinical School of WA, has provided invaluable insight and guidance to all of us.

"I thank him for his dedication and efforts, and trust he will continue to remain involved with the organisation, albeit in a different capacity."

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Media enquiries:

Kerida Hodge, Manager Marketing and Communications 08 6389 4561

Rural Health West aims to improve access to quality healthcare for rural communities through the provision of a highly skilled, motivated and sustainable medical and allied health workforce. We are a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health.