

16 October 2024

## Rural champion awarded life membership

Rural doctor and educator Associate Professor Andrew Kirke was yesterday inducted as a Life Member of Rural Health West in recognition of his long-time commitment to advancing rural health and his enduring support for the organisation.

Currently juggling roles as Head of The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia (RCSWA) and working as a GP in Dalyellup, Andrew served on the Rural Health West Board of Directors from 2016 to 2022.

Andrew is a graduate of The University of Western Australia and undertook his GP training in Kalgoorlie, which nurtured his early passion for rural medicine.

Working as a procedural GP in the Goldfields and Kimberley before relocating to the South West, Andrew took on a teaching role with RCSWA in 2006. He became Head of RCSWA in 2019.

Under his leadership, RCSWA opened additional sites – in Collie and the Warren Blackwood region – and significantly expanded opportunities for rural-intent students to complete their final year of medical school in country locations.

Rural Health West Chair, the Honourable Tuck Waldron, said Andrew is a prominent voice in rural health and a strong advocate for disadvantaged communities throughout rural WA.

“Andrew is an incredibly generous contributor to rural health, actively promoting rural medical careers to the next generation of young doctors through his involvement with RCSWA and his previous role as the Chair of the Rural Doctors Association of WA,” Tuck said.

“Andrew’s absolute commitment to forging new rural education and training opportunities have been absolutely vital in developing a new and growing generation of young doctors excited about rural medical careers.

“He has a strong social conscience, and always provided keen insight, context and compassion during Board discussions. He was a significant support to me when I commenced my term as Chair, with little prior exposure to the health sector.”

Andrew joins Emeritus Professor Max Kamien, Dr Felicity Jeffries, Dr Mal Hodsdon, Professor Geoff Riley AM, Dr Stephen Langford and Professor Tony Celenza as a Life Member of Rural Health West.

**ENDS**

**Media enquiries:**

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*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.*