

MEDIA RELEASE

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Dr Paddy ready for a new adventure in the Kimberley

Patrick “Paddy” Davern has experienced life as a doctor around the world.

“From 1992 to 1994 I worked in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, which was a small town in the desert then,” the Irish GP said.

“I’ve worked in Qatar for eight years. I’ve encountered different cultures and different physical environments before.”

But there was one spot where he always wanted to return – Australia.

On July 1, Dr Davern will start with Derby Aboriginal Health Service.

In December 1988, Dr Davern and his wife Anne, a nurse, touched down in Queensland.

He worked at Mackay Base Hospital for four years, and it was in Queensland where the couple welcomed their two youngest children.

This year, he learned from his mistakes, and chose to arrive in Western Australia during winter, ready to take on new challenges.

“There’s a steep learning curve. Clinically with illnesses we don’t see commonly in Ireland, like rheumatic fever or diphtheria,” he said.

“Administratively with Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which we have to get familiar with.

“Then to adapt to a new culture and adapt to a new physical environment with heat and things like that.”

Paddy was drawn to this new experience through the help of Rural Health West.

“I had it always in my mind that when I got closer, when I got into my 60s, and the children were all grown up, I could go off again, and I wanted to explore,” he said.

In 2025, he met the Rural Health West workforce solution team at the Doctor’s Job Fair in Dublin.

The London and Dublin job fairs were held in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia and alongside Derby Aboriginal Health Service, Bega Garabirringu Health Service, Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, and Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation.

Paddy said the team from Rural Health West beamed with positivity and reassurance during their interactions.

“I think the most important thing is human connection. When you meet somebody and you talk to them face to face, you get a greater sense from people’s body language than you do if you’re emailing someone,” he said.

“Rural Health West has been amazing in helping me with Derby, advising me about the steps, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registration step, the visa step.

“The organisation holds your hand through the process. I have and will recommend it as an organisation that can help you to relocate to Australia. They’re brilliant.”

This new adventure will also offer up the opportunity to visit their son, also named Paddy, who works as a mental health nurse at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

According to the *Rural General Practice in Western Australia: Annual Workforce Update*, as at November 2025, 26 International Medical Graduates (36.6 per cent) worked in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services workforce.

Rural Health West CEO Professor Catherine Elliott said International Medical Graduates were essential for delivering vital expertise to remote communities.

“It is people like Paddy who make such a difference on the ground. Their decision to move across the world and offer their expertise assists all Australians to access care closer to home,” she said.

“By working collaboratively with organisations like AHCWA we hope to continue bringing in doctors like Paddy.”

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Media Notes:

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, Disability and Ageing.