

# MEDIA RELEASE



Monday 9 February 2009

## Victorian GPs urged to assist rural doctors in fire ravaged areas

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is calling on Victorian GPs who can volunteer 2-5 days of their time to assist rural doctors in fire ravaged areas of country Victoria to meet increased demand for local medical services, as news comes in of some rural surgeries being devastated by Saturday's bushfires and at least one rural doctor being admitted to hospital due to fire-related injuries.

"We would urge any available GPs from Melbourne and other non-fire affected areas of Victoria who can spare a few days of their time to get in touch with the Rural Workforce Agency of Victoria—the latter organisation is mobilising doctors who can provide locum assistance for general practices in fire-affected and nearby areas" said RDAA President, Dr Nola Maxfield.

"Some rural doctors in the disaster areas are currently having to fight fires as volunteers or are trying to protect their own properties. Those not in the front line of the fire are under pressure to provide medical services to distraught patients in the face of some surgeries being lost to fire and at least one rural doctor being admitted to hospital due to fire-related injuries.

"Volunteer GPs are needed to help meet increased demand for normal general practice services in fire-affected and nearby areas, as well as assisting patients with fire-related conditions such as minor burns, eye irritation, and asthma and other respiratory conditions. Counselling of patients may also be required.

"Importantly, many people will have lost their medications in the fires so there will be a huge need for many patients who rely on medications to get these replenished quickly.

"This is an absolutely tragic situation for many communities across Victoria, and our hearts go out to all those affected by it."

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### Information for GPs who wish to volunteer their services

The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) is organising locum relief through the relevant Divisions of General Practice for those practices affected by the fires. Any doctors who are available to provide locum relief are asked to email Tony Mackinnon, RWAV's General Manager, Recruitment at: [tonym@rwav.com.au](mailto:tonym@rwav.com.au) or RWAV CEO, Claire Austin, at: [clairea@rwav.com.au](mailto:clairea@rwav.com.au).

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