

10 June 2025
Joint media release

Tireless advocate for rural healthcare made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Rural Doctors Association of South Australia (RDASA) have warmly congratulated former RDAA and RDASA President, Dr Peter Rischbieth (**pictured**), on being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his service to rural health as a medical practitioner.

The honour was announced as part of this year's King's Birthday Honours list.

"Peter is one of those people who was born to be a rural doctor" RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.

"Just recently retired, he has devoted his professional life to providing exceptional medical care to the SA rural community of Murray Bridge, while also advocating tirelessly for better access to healthcare for rural communities across both SA and Australia more widely.

"Peter worked in Murray Bridge as a local Rural Generalist doctor for more than 35 years, while also leading the Rural Doctors Association of South Australia (RDASA) for 12 years and serving as a member of the RDASA Executive (including Vice President) for many more.

"Over multiple decades too, he has made a substantial contribution to the work of the rural doctors movement nationally – including as RDAA President from 2007 to 2008, and as RDAA Vice President before that – again advocating passionately and tirelessly for better access to healthcare for those living in the bush.

"His involvement in both RDASA and RDAA, particularly when President of each organisation, required a very significant time commitment on top of Peter's already busy role as a rural doctor."

Dr Rischbieth's successor as RDASA President, Dr Bill Geyer, said: "During his years of involvement with RDASA and RDAA, Peter has represented rural doctors and their communities in hundreds of meetings with the federal and state governments, and has undertaken hundreds of media interviews – often at short notice – all to support the organisations' advocacy for better access to rural health services for rural patients. Many of these commitments have come at a significant cost to his own time, yet he has never baulked from these commitments and has never complained.

"As RDASA President, Peter was actively involved in helping to lead negotiations – in conjunction with AMA(SA) – for a fairer contract for South Australian rural GPs who provide Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) services to their local hospitals.

"For one of the most recent rounds of negotiations (2020 to 2022), he took on this significant voluntary workload at a time when he was also incredibly busy supporting his community through the COVID pandemic.



“The success of these negotiations was critical in helping to address the severe rural doctor workforce shortages that have been impacting SA over many years, and is testament to Peter’s tireless efforts that consumed a very considerable amount of his own time outside his clinical workload.”

Dr Rischbieth has also been recognised for his immense contribution to Rural Medicine with the ACRRM-RDAA Peter Graham ‘Cohuna’ Award in 2009 and RDAA Rural Doctor of the Year Award in 2022 (jointly awarded that year with Dr Sue Velovski from Lismore, NSW).

Raised in Adelaide, Dr Rischbieth was inspired to consider Rural Medicine as a career while watching his father (a neurologist) and uncle (a paediatrician) providing free consultations to the community of Penneshaw while on holidays on Kangaroo Island in the 1960s.

However, his pathway into Medicine was not easy – he had to repeat Year 12 to get the required tertiary entrance score for medical school, and had already been accepted into teachers’ college before he received a ‘last gasp’ offer to study Medicine.

Dr Lewandowski said: “As a Rural Generalist doctor, Peter provided primary care, anaesthetics and obstetrics care, emergency care and inpatient care for the Murray Bridge community from 1987 until his recent retirement. He was also a highly respected mentor in teaching and supervising medical students, interns and GP Registrars in Murray Bridge for many years.

“As a movement, the Rural Doctors Association has been incredibly lucky that Peter landed in our orbit, and chose to contribute his time and efforts to our work. We have appreciated his contribution enormously.

“We also thank his incredible family – his wife Mandy, his sons Will and Tom, and now their own young families, for truly supporting Peter to make such a significant contribution to the rural doctors movement and the health of rural and remote Australians.”

RDAA has also warmly recognised other RDA members who have received King’s Birthday Honours for their dedication and commitment to Medicine and Rural Medicine – they are:

- The late Dr John Dyson-Berry OAM (Victoria)
- Dr David Iser OAM (Victoria)
- Associate Professor David Rimmer OAM (Queensland)

Downloadable photo – [Dr Peter Rischbieth](#)

Available for interview:

Dr Peter Rischbieth AM
RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski
RDASA President, Dr Bill Geyer
RDAA CEO, Ms Peta Rutherford

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