



## Media release

24 April 2026

# Two Rural NSW Medical Students Awarded 2026 Dr Andrew Egan Rural Medical Scholarship

The Rural Doctors' Association of NSW (RDANSW) and the Egan family are pleased to announce that two outstanding medical students from rural New South Wales, **Ella Cowgill** and **Kainen White**, have been selected as the 2026 recipients of the **Dr Andrew Egan Rural Medical Scholarship**.

Each scholarship is valued at \$7,500 and provides financial support to assist with the costs of study, accommodation, and living expenses. Recipients also benefit from a year-long mentorship with an experienced rural doctor through RDANSW.



Above: Ella Cowgill, recipient of the scholarship in 2026

Established in 2021, the scholarship honours the legacy of Dr Andrew Egan, a highly respected procedural GP who served the Cooma community for more than 30 years. Dr Egan was a Past President of RDANSW and a longstanding member since its formation.

Ella Cowgill, who grew up in Bermagui on the Far South Coast of NSW, is currently a second-year medical student at the University of Wollongong. Her rural upbringing has strongly influenced both her decision to pursue medicine and her commitment to returning to practise in a rural community.

"In the Bega Valley, specialist appointments often require long-distance travel, with services limited and frequently stretched," Ella said. "During the 2020 Black Summer bushfires, when roads were cut and our community was under significant pressure, the importance of capable local doctors became even clearer. They provided not only medical care, but also reassurance and stability during an incredibly uncertain time."

From July 2026, Ella will begin full-time clinical placements across a range of disciplines, followed by a year-long rural placement in NSW from July 2027.

"The Dr Andrew Egan Rural Medical Scholarship will help cover the travel and accommodation costs associated with my rural placements, ensuring financial limitations do not restrict my ability to gain the experience needed for rural practice," she said.



Above: Kainen White, scholarship recipient

**Kainen White**, the second recipient, is a second-year medical student at the University of Newcastle, studying through the Joint Medical Program. He grew up in Taree, where he developed a strong appreciation for the strengths and challenges of rural communities.

"In regional communities, healthcare is not simply a service—it is a foundation of community stability and wellbeing," Kainen said.

Kainen's pathway into medicine has been shaped by resilience and personal experience, including supporting his family through significant health challenges during his Higher School Certificate year.

"These experiences have given me a deeper understanding of the patient and family journey through the healthcare system and reinforced the importance of continuity of care, clear communication, and compassionate support," he said. He also highlighted the critical role rural doctors play in addressing healthcare inequities across New South Wales.

"Geographic isolation, workforce shortages, and limited access to specialist services contribute to poorer health outcomes in rural areas. Rural General Practitioners are essential in delivering comprehensive care and coordinating services for these communities."

Like many rural students, both Ella and Kainen relocated significant distances to pursue their medical studies. Due to the intensity of their courses, maintaining part-time employment can be challenging, making financial support such as this scholarship particularly valuable.

Both recipients expressed their gratitude to the Egan family and RDANSW for their support.

**RDA NSW President Dr Rachel Christmas**, pictured right, said the quality of applicants this year was exceptional.



"RDANSW once again received a large number of applications for the Scholarship, and the Selection Committee was highly impressed by the calibre of candidates," Dr Christmas said.

"Dr Andrew Egan was a highly respected colleague, friend, father, and husband. As a dedicated rural doctor, he provided comprehensive care to his community in Cooma, working not only in general practice but also as a Visiting Medical Officer across obstetrics, anaesthetics, emergency medicine, and inpatient care."

"RDANSW is proud to continue working with the Egan family to offer this scholarship. It provides vital financial and mentoring support to medical students on their journey to becoming rural doctors, ensuring that Dr Egan's legacy continues to benefit rural communities into the future."

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