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Should a robot replace your doctor?

Keynote speakers set to impress at peak rural medical conference

Rural Medicine Australia 2023

18-21 October, Hobart

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#RMA23

What do a human rights lawyer and hostage survivor; a psychologist from the world's northernmost town; an expert in artificial intelligence; and a farmer leading advocacy on climate change have in common?

They will all be keynote speakers at next month's peak rural medical conference, Rural Medicine Australia 2023 (RMA23), which promises to have delegates on the edge of their seats as they speak on everything from artificial intelligence in healthcare to climate and health – a particularly poignant topic as Australia braces for a sweltering summer ahead.

Co-hosted by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), RMA23 will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart from 18-21 October 2023.

The event is expected to attract up to 1000 rural doctors, trainees, medical students and others, and is an official pre-event for WONCA World Conference 23, the global conference for GPs and family doctors, which will be held in Sydney the following week.

"We are excited to offer an incredible keynote speaker line-up for RMA23" ACRRM President, Dr Halliday said.

"Dr Marlin Fors, a psychologist and psychoanalyst from the world's northernmost town, Hammerfest in Norway, will speak about "geographical narcissism" or urban bias - a subtle, often unconscious, devaluation of rural knowledge. This is a topic that resonates with rural doctors, who are often faced with unfounded negative assumptions about their skills and expertise.

"It's an important reason why all medical students and junior doctors should spend time in a rural setting during their training, to gain more of an appreciation of the high level of knowledge and skill that rural doctors bring to their work and communities.

"Delegates will also hear from Rabia Siddique, an Australian international humanitarian lawyer, retired British Army senior officer, former war crimes and terrorism prosecutor, and hostage survivor. She will share her unique story of courage, strength and grit to discuss issues relating to resilience, authentic and ethical leadership, equality and diversity.

“Rural doctors are not exempt from the ‘Me too’ movement, and addressing it starts with us.

“Another home-grown Australian hero, **Dr Anika Molesworth** features on our keynote speaker list. Climate change is creating a global health emergency which is being felt throughout the world, including in rural and remote communities across Australia. Anika is a farmer and scientist who is widely recognised for her work in generating climate change awareness and inspiring change for a better future.

“And **Dr Alan D. Thompson**, a world expert in Artificial Intelligence (AI), will speak on the topic *AI versus human physicians* and explore the profound impact of AI on rural health. This is sure to make for a really compelling presentation!”

Other keynote speakers will include outgoing RDAA President, **Dr Megan Belot** and incoming RDAA President **Dr RT Lewandowski**, ACRRM President **Dr Daniel Halliday**, RACGP President **Dr Nicole Higgins**, the National Rural Health Commissioner **Adjunct Professor Ruth Stewart**, the Federal Shadow Health Minister **Senator Anne Ruston**, and health journalist and commentator **Dr Norman Swan** (RMA23 Master of Ceremonies).

RDAA President, Dr Megan Belot, said the exciting keynote lineup will be augmented by a strong program of clinical skills sessions and workshops, as well as opportunities for discussion on important issues impacting rural doctors and the communities they serve.

“We will have specialised streams aimed at rural doctors, junior doctors and medical students; the latest research in Rural Medicine; sessions focused on the hot topics affecting the rural medical sector and the health of rural communities – including our very popular RMA President’s Breakfast – and a fantastic social program including our annual Conference Awards Dinner” **Dr Belot said.**

“We are excited to be holding the conference in Hobart, and expect a larger than usual number of international delegates as the World Family Doctor conference (WONCA) will be held five days later in Sydney.

“We really look forward to RMA23 getting underway in less than a month’s time!”

Media are welcome to attend most sessions at RMA23, but must pre-register in advance by contacting one of the RMA Media Team on the contact numbers below.

Find the program for RMA23 by [clicking here](#)

Find the full keynote speaker list for RMA23 by [clicking here](#)

Media contacts:

Patrick Daley (RDAA) – 0408 004 890

Ineke Kuiper (RDAA) – 0408 669 638

Petrina Smith (ACRRM) – 0414 820 847