



**ANZCA**  
FPM

21 November 2023

Executive Officer, Medical  
Ahpra  
GPO Box 9958  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Via email: [medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au)

### **Consultation on the recognition of rural generalist medicine**

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is committed to setting the highest standards of clinical practice in the fields of anaesthesia, perioperative medicine, and pain medicine. As one of the largest medical colleges in Australia, ANZCA is responsible for the postgraduate training programs of anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians, in addition to promoting best practice and ongoing continuous improvement that contributes to a high-quality health system.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the application to have rural generalist medicine recognised as a new field of specialty practice within the specialty of General Practice, under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

ANZCA's purpose is to serve our communities by leading high quality care in anaesthesia, perioperative and pain medicine, optimising health and reducing the burden of pain. Underpinning this is the premise that all people have a right to access high quality healthcare, regardless of where they live. We have a long-standing commitment to improving health outcomes for rural, regional and remote communities and the health and wellbeing of our fellows, trainees and specialist international medical graduates living and working in these areas.

The college recognises that in some rural and remote regions of Australia, circumstances preclude the referral of certain types of surgery, and establishing a specialist anaesthesia practice is not viable. Recognising the benefits of providing care as close to home as possible, a number of different service models have evolved to provide specialist care to these communities.

We acknowledge the vital role general practitioners with advanced training in anaesthesia play in many rural and remote communities and we are committed to continuing to provide supervision, training and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to support them to provide safe and high-quality care.

In 1994, ANZCA, the Australia College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners established the Joint Consultative Committee on Anaesthesia (JCCA). Over the subsequent 28 years the JCCA provided hundreds of rural general practitioners with advanced training in anaesthesia and ensured that the care provided by GP anaesthetists is safe, meets contemporary standards of clinical practice and is practical and responsive to the needs of rural practitioners and the communities they serve.

In 2021, the three colleges signed a memorandum of understanding to develop a new 12-month qualification, the Diploma of Rural Generalist Anaesthesia. The aim of the diploma is to provide training to produce rural generalist anaesthesia graduates who can deliver safe anaesthesia and perioperative care in rural and remote settings for patients classed as ASA 1, 2 and stable 3

undergoing elective surgery and patients requiring emergent surgery. The first candidates commenced the diploma in February 2023.

ANZCA is supportive of the specialist recognition of rural generalist medicine as a sub-speciality of general practice, noting that:

- Registrars wishing to gain advanced skills in anaesthesia complete the diploma of rural generalist anaesthesia.
- Rural generalists with advanced skills in anaesthesia are recommended to undertake the CPD program-level requirements identified in the ANZCA and FPM CPD standard.
- The relevant medical colleges, that is, ANZCA, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, remain responsible for setting standards in anaesthesia, surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology.

We believe that recognition of rural generalist medicine as a sub-speciality of general practice will provide a nationally consistent and transparent framework for training, safety and quality standards, and credentialling, thereby improving healthcare for our regional, rural and remote communities.

Additional benefits may include a more attractive training and career pathway, enhancing the appeal of rural generalism as a speciality, and better workforce planning through enhanced data

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Australia College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to deliver the diploma of rural generalist anaesthesia and improve access to specialist healthcare in regional, rural and remote communities.

Should you require any further information in relation to this submission, please contact me at [policy@anzca.edu.au](mailto:policy@anzca.edu.au).

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Deborah Wilson  
**ANZCA Councillor**  
**Chair, Tripartite Committee of Rural Generalist Anaesthesia**