



STATEMENT ON RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICINE

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) believes all people should have access to high quality emergency medicine care. Whilst remote communities may not be able sustain emergency medicine specialists, doctors in such areas should have access to advice, educational opportunities and clinical assistance from emergency medicine specialists within their rural emergency medicine network. Clinical assistance may take many forms including, but not confined to, telephone advice, telemedicine and medical retrievals.

The ACEM endorses the concept of Rural Emergency Medicine Networks in which regional base or metropolitan hospitals provide outreach services to local non-specialist practitioners. Such outreach services will include clinical advice, professional development and continuing education, the development and implementation of policies and procedures in emergency medicine and quality assurance activities.

The ACEM believes that every community in Australia and New Zealand should fall within a Rural Emergency Medicine Network and that each network will have an appointed director who possesses fellowship of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. The role of the director will be predominantly to oversee the development and maintenance of the emergency medicine network, though a limited clinical role to maintain skills is encouraged.

The ACEM acknowledges the valuable role played in the provision of emergency care in rural areas by doctors who are not fellows of the college. General Practitioners and specialists in other disciplines play a crucial part in the provision of emergency care in rural and remote areas. Rural Emergency Medicine Networks should be established and maintained to work in co-operation with, and to complement, established emergency and critical care networks where applicable.