



The Hon Dr David Gillespie MP
Minister for Regional Health
By email Minister.Gillespie@health.gov.au

cc

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health & Aged Care
By email Minister.Hunt@health.gov.au

10 December 2021

Rural and remote area Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) debt incentives

Dear Minister,

Osteopathy Australia is contacting you regarding your announcement that the Federal Government will provide an incentive for eligible doctors and nurse practitioners to practice in rural, remote or very remote areas of Australia, by eliminating all or part of their Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) debt.

This is a great initiative, but we are dismayed that osteopaths and other allied health practitioners are not included to boost the rural and regional health workforce.

We know from research, various enquiries and commissions that allied health services are key to early intervention in and prevention of health conditions that if left untreated result in costly hospitalisations and increased burden of disease. Excluding allied health from such programs further disenfranchises and increases inequity or access for both rural and remote consumers and health practitioners.

It makes no sense to exclude regional or rural allied health to ensure access and equity for health consumers, no matter where they live.

We request an urgent meeting to discuss this issue.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Antony Nicholas", with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

Antony Nicholas
ceo@osteopathy.org.au
Chief Executive Officer