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Record number of permanent senior doctors for South West

A record number of permanent senior doctors are delivering medical services throughout the South West this year.

South West Hospital and Health Service Executive Director of Medical Services Dr Chris Buck said the region now had 18 permanent senior doctors on staff.

“These include six at Roma, five at Charleville, four at St George and one each at Cunnamulla, Mungindi and Mitchell,” Dr Buck said.

“We have seen a steady expansion in our permanent senior doctor ranks thanks to our increasingly successful recruitment programs and our region is becoming increasingly attractive for both senior and junior doctors looking for new challenges.

“This growth in the South West’s permanent medical establishment is a reflection of the health service’s strategy over the past several years of reducing reliance on locums by attracting more permanent doctors, aiming specifically at young Australian graduates.

“This year, we have only six medical positions filled by locums in the South West.

“These are one position each at Injune, Surat, Augathella, Quilpie, Cunnamulla and Charleville.

“However, for these locum positions, we have in place a regular panel of doctors who share the positions and who provide their communities with a familiar face and continuity of care.”

Dr Buck said another record broken this year was for all three major hospitals in the region – Roma, Charleville and St George – to have permanent directors of medical services in charge.

“This is the first time this has happened in 18 years,” Dr Buck said.

“In previous years, either one or two of our three major hospital directors of medical services have been locums rather than permanent staff.

“But with the permanent appointment of Dr Alan Richardson to Roma in January and Dr Philip Bailey to Charleville early last year – along with our long-time permanent Director of Medical Services at St George, Dr Cameron Bardsley – all there major facilities are now headed by permanent doctors.”

Dr Buck said Roma’s Dr Richardson previously had undertaken work as an advanced trainee in obstetrics at the hospital.
“Alan enjoyed his time at Roma so much that he then took up a permanent senior doctor position and has now been successful in being selected as the new director of medical services,” he said.

Dr Buck said the South West also was host this year to 10 junior doctors doing rotations in the region from major hospitals in Brisbane, as well as five medical students doing placements from various university medical schools.

“The junior doctor program is an excellent initiative that allows young doctors from the city to gain additional skills and broaden their experience by rotating through one of our hospitals for several months at a time,” he said.

“We hope this will open their eyes to the opportunities and diverse range of professional experiences available in country areas such as ours when planning their future careers and consider us favourably as a future employer.”

Dr Buck said the junior doctor and medical student placement programs had been made possible by the growing number of permanent senior doctors in the region.

“Having such a pool of senior and highly skilled doctors has given the South West HHS the capacity to host, teach and supervise the next generation of young doctors,” he said.

“That’s why we are now able to host junior doctors undertaking training throughout the region.”

Dr Buck said the South West’s senior doctors worked as a team with other clinicians and support staff dedicated to serving patients.

“Patient care and good outcomes is about a whole team working together, not just medical but also nursing, allied health and other support staff,” he said.

“Strengthening any element of this team, such as our medical establishment, contributes positively to improved patient care for all our local communities.”

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