



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Education Portfolio

Joint Media Release

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HELP debt wiped for doctors and nurse practitioners to work in rural and remote Australia

The Hon Jason Clare MP

Minister for Education

The Hon Mark Butler MP

Minister for Health and Aged Care

The Hon Emma McBride MP

Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health

A doctor or nurse practitioner who lives and works in the most remote parts of Australia will have their HELP debt wiped under legislation being introduced by the Albanese Government today.

The legislation introduces the incentive for doctors and nurse practitioners to live and work in the places that need them the most by wiping or reducing their HECs/HELP debt.

It means that a doctor or nurse practitioner who lives and works in:

- A remote or very remote town for a time period of half the length of their course would have their entire HELP debt wiped.
- A large, medium or small rural town for a time period equal to the whole length of their course would have their entire HELP debt wiped.
- An eligible place for a period of time equivalent to half the time required is eligible to half the applicable debt reduction.

The Government expects this legislation will attract about 850 doctors and nurse practitioners every year.

For nurse practitioners, the legislation will go towards covering a Master's Degree in Commonwealth supported study, a full fee-paying place, or a combination of both.

Eligible locations are determined by the Modified Monash Model which classifies remoteness. The measures are effective from 1 January 2022.

Quotes attributable to Minister Clare:

“Rural and remote Australia is experiencing skills shortages in many key professions. One of these is in doctors and nurse practitioners.”

“Zero HECS debt is a great incentive for young graduates to live and work and build their careers in rural and remote communities.”

Quotes attributable to Minister Butler:

“We are making sure all Australians have access to quality health care, no matter where they live.”

“We recognise the challenge of recruiting and retaining primary health care workers in rural and remote communities.”

“These measures will make country practice a more attractive long-term career option for doctors and nurse practitioners.”

Quotes attributable to Assistant Minister McBride:

“The Albanese Government is working to improve health care for people living outside big cities by encouraging more doctors and nurse practitioners to work in rural and remote communities.”

“We’re determined to make sure all Australians have access to the care they need, when they need it close to home, and these measures will help us address workforce shortages in our healthcare system.”