

# Border Mail

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## Look at training that works, urges doctor

BY DI THOMAS

WANGARATTA physician Les Bolitho has urged politicians to examine training models that work, including programs in the North East.

Dr Bolitho, past-president of the Australian Association of Consultant Physicians, said without an efficient training model, money committed by the Federal Government to training doctors and specialists in rural areas would not produce the desired outcomes.

"We are training students and post-graduates in rural and regional settings but our capacity in many areas is already stretched to the limit, and that is without taking account of the significant increase in training places that will be required next

year with more post-graduates coming through," Dr Bolitho said.

"Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is right in suggesting that rural and regional hospitals can provide a very rich training experience for both general practitioners and specialists, but simply throwing money at this is not going to produce good training places.

"We need to look at the training models in rural areas that are working, such as the programs in North East Victoria and use them as the basis for developing larger training programs across Australia.

"And we need the consultant physicians, pediatricians, specialists and general practitioners who have the capacity and the experience to provide this

training environment, but we also need investment in teaching infrastructure, IT and accommodation for the trainees."

Dr Bolitho said consultant physicians and pediatricians, who were physicians for children, were significant providers of services in both the hospital and primary care health sectors.

The association this week invited Mr Rudd and Health Minister Nicola Roxon to spend a day with a consultant physician just as they had spent a day with a GP, so they could see what consultant physicians and pediatricians did.

Dr Bolitho said part of the day could be spent looking at how the Government might spend some of its \$632 million in training in rural areas.