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Upgrades needed

■ Better infrastructure required for federal health reforms

By STEVE KELLY

WANGARATTA consultant physician, Les Bolitho, has warned that health infrastructure upgrades and extra training capacity will be needed to meet the changes under the Federal Government's health reform.

He has called on the government to address teaching infrastructure, IT and accommodation issues to support extra training places.

"We are currently training students and post-graduates in

rural and regional settings," Mr Bolitho said.

"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 is the brain behind a future Medical Centre for Excellence in Wangaratta that will train medical post-

graduates.

"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," he said.

"There are also currently specialist support programs for consultant physicians and geriatricians, but they also require consistent resources to enable them to also support training."