

11/04/2017

Life Membership Award for rural health champion

One of Western Australia's longest serving medical directors, Dr Stephen Langford, has been awarded Rural Health West Life Membership in recognition for his contributions to rural medicine over three decades at this year's Rural Health West Doctors' Service Awards.

Dr Langford first entered rural medicine in 1983 when he joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) in Port Hedland.

As a private pilot with an interest in aviation and emergency medicine, Dr Langford felt the North West of Western Australia seemed a better fit than the sojourn to Antarctica he was also contemplating.

"I had planned to stay one year, but stayed for three. Although I relocated to Perth, I continued to work in rural medicine for many years," Dr Langford said.

"Rural practice offers a diverse range of work, regular challenges and a chance to put a broad range of skills and knowledge into practice," Dr Langford said.

Dr Langford served on the Board of Rural Health West (and its prior incarnation the Western Australian Centre for Remote and Rural Medicine from 2006 to 2015).

"I joined the Rural Health West Board as I believe we need good doctors in the rural health system to ensure communities can quality medical care.

"Rural Health West has been instrumental at shaping rural health workforce policy and practice and I'm proud to be part of that."

During Dr Langford's years on the Board, the organisation championed the establishment of the Rural Generalist Pathway which provided rural doctors with tailored training opportunities, a dedicated GP recruitment service, and GP proceduralist mentoring programs.

Rural Health West Chief Executive Officer Tim Shackleton said it was a privilege to acknowledge Dr Langford's commitment to Rural Health West.

"Stephen is a long-time colleague, and I know firsthand the enormous impact he has had on rural communities throughout Western Australia," Mr Shackleton said.

“Stephen has played an enormous role in shaping the rural health sector in Western Australia through his work as doctor, medical director and Board member.

“On behalf of the Rural Health West Board of Directors and Western Australia’s country communities, I’m extremely honoured to acknowledge his contributions.”

Nearly thirty rural doctors were recognised at the Awards ceremony, with Rural Health West also awarding the inaugural 50 year service award to Dr James Bowie from Manjimup.

A full list of award recipients is shown below.

50 years’ service

- Dr James Bowie, Manjimup

40 years’ service

- Dr May Ure, Albany
- Dr Jane James, Denmark
- Dr Basudeb Saharay, Collie
- Dr Thomas Jones, Bridgetown
- Dr Gary Mincham, Bunbury
- Dr Kim Tee Ong, Mandurah

30 years’ service

- Dr Matthew Hodge, Albany
- Dr Christine Hartley, Australind
- Dr Hugh Leslie, Albany
- Dr James Murray, Geraldton
- Dr Susan Shaw, Narrikup
- Dr Gary Tapper, Busselton
- Dr William Walker, Mandurah

20 years’ service

- Dr Craig Drummond, Port Hedland
- Dr Sally Edmonds, RFDS
- Dr Michael Massey, Busselton
- Dr Cathryn Milligan, Margaret River
- Dr Noreen Parshad, Geraldton
- Dr Anne Richards, Kununurra
- Dr Marie Fox, Northam

Special Awards

- Dr John Rosser Davies, Manjimup
- Dr Siew-Lee Thoo, Kimberley
- Dr Alison Turner, Manjimup
- Dr Susan Downes, RFDS
- Dr Olga Ward, Eastern Wheatbelt
- Dr Steven Lai, Wheatbelt

ENDS

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Rural Health West aims to improve access to quality healthcare for rural communities through the provision of a highly skilled, motivated and sustainable medical and allied health workforce. We are a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health.