

24 July 2026

No Australian should have to live with untreated pain because of their postcode

National Pain Week – 26 - 31 July

#NationalPainWeek #PainChanger

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is encouraging Australians living with ongoing pain to seek help early, reminding people that persistent pain is not something they simply have to live with.

Marking National Pain Week, RDAA President Professor Sarah Chalmers said pain that lasts for more than three months can have a significant impact on every aspect of a person's life, affecting physical health, mental wellbeing, relationships, work and participation in the community.

"Chronic pain affects millions of Australians, and people living in rural and remote communities often face additional barriers to getting the care they need," Professor Chalmers said.

"Distance, difficulty in getting timely appointments, and limited access to specialist pain services, can mean people wait longer for treatment, or simply learn to live with pain.



"Too often we hear people say, 'It's just part of getting older' or 'I just have to put up with it'. That's simply not true. While pain can become more common as we age, persistent pain should always be assessed and managed."

Professor Chalmers said rural GPs play a vital role in helping patients understand the cause of their pain and develop a treatment plan that reflects their individual circumstances.

"Managing chronic pain isn't usually about finding one magic solution. It often involves a combination of approaches and practical strategies that help people stay active and engaged in life," she said.

"For some people, a referral to a pain specialist can also be an important part of treatment. Pain specialists can assess whether patients may benefit from a range of advanced therapies and interventional procedures that can help reduce pain, improve function and enhance quality of life.

"Unfortunately, many rural Australians face long waiting times or have to travel significant distances to access specialist pain services. No Australian should miss out on effective pain management simply because of where they live.

"The earlier people seek help, the better the chance of preventing pain from becoming a long-term condition that limits their independence and quality of life.

"Whether you're a farmer, a tradie, a teacher or a grandparent who wants to keep up with the grandchildren, effective pain management is about helping people continue doing the things that matter most to them.

"Nobody should accept ongoing pain as simply 'normal' or feel they have to struggle through it alone. With the right support and a personalised management plan, many people can reduce the impact of persistent pain and get back to living fuller, healthier lives."

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[Photo of Professor Sarah Chalmers](#)

Available for interview:

RDAA President, Prof Sarah Chalmers

RDAA CEO, Peta Rutherford

Media contacts:

Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638

Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890