



Telederm National: vision for its future

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Dr Jim Muir is a consultant dermatologist based in Brisbane. He is director of the department of dermatology of the Mater hospital as well as working in private practice.

Jim has been involved in the delivery of telemedicine since the late 1990's. This has involved both videoconferencing and store and forward methods. For the last five years he has been the dermatologist for the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's 'Telederm National' site. The site is funded through the federal government's Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program.

Telederm delivers both on line education and specific patient advice to doctors throughout Australia. Educational material on the site includes over 600 case studies as well as material illustrating dermatological surgery, digital photography, guides on the use of topical treatments, journal reviews and more. The site is accessible to its 1300 registered users 24 hours a day, year round.

Doctors submitting cases for advice receive an answer with hours. The store and forward method is used. In dermatology this method has been shown to have equivalent diagnostic and management accuracy to face to face consultation. Although designed to meet the needs of rural and remote medical practitioners it is also used by urban doctors. Telederm allows doctors to overcome the barriers of distance, workforce shortage and long waiting times for traditional face to face consultation with a dermatologist.

Dr Muir's presentation will illustrate the features of 'Telederm National' and his vision for its future.