

Outcome 12

Health Workforce Capacity

Australians have access to an enhanced health workforce

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Outcome 12 aims to ensure Australia's health workforce has sufficient numbers of high quality doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to meet the health service needs of the community. The outcome also focuses on the effective distribution of the workforce to meet the health service needs of Indigenous Australians, and those living in remote, rural and outer metropolitan Australia.

The Australian Government aims to achieve this outcome by delivering initiatives that address workforce issues and by funding scholarship schemes.

Outcome 12 is the responsibility of the Mental Health and Workforce Division.

The Year Ahead

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue its focus on developing additional infrastructure to expand the training of specialists and other medical staff. This will include providing training to doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, in a range of settings outside public hospitals.

The Government will also aim to improve the supply, quality and distribution of Australia's health workforce. In doing so, it will work in partnership with health professional associations, the medical, nursing and allied health education and training sectors, accreditation bodies, and State and Territory governments.

Key Strategic Directions for 2007-08

During 2007-08, the Australian Government will:

- support general practitioners and medical specialists to train and work in locations with an identified undersupply, including rural areas. Focus will also be on attracting medical students to these areas;
- ensure specialist training provides support for current and future health needs;
- establish, with the states and territories, a national scheme for the registration of nine health professions and the accreditation of their education and training;
- enhance the nursing and allied health workforce;
- provide workforce opportunities for overseas trained doctors within Australia;
- continue to improve the health workforce capacity underpinning health services for Indigenous Australians; and
- continue to support growth at Rural Clinical Schools and University Departments of Rural Health to deliver more rural training opportunities for students.

Major Activities

Support for General Practitioners, Medical Specialists and Medical Students

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to support general practitioners and medical specialists to work in areas with an identified undersupply, including rural areas. To achieve this, the Government will continue the More Doctors for Outer Metropolitan Areas Program to encourage a further 265 general practitioners and specialists to practise in outer metropolitan areas, from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2010. The Government will also focus on expanding the Outer Metropolitan Specialist Trainee Program to further improve the supply of specialists in outer metropolitan areas with workforce shortages.

The Government will encourage medical students to consider future careers in rural practice through scholarship programs. In 2007-08, the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship Scheme will provide 550 places and the John Flynn Scholarship Scheme will provide 600 places.

The Government will also continue funding an integrated package of initiatives under the Rural Health Strategy to help deliver more doctors and better services to rural and regional communities. As part of this, the Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme will provide 100 scholarships which are attached to 100 new places in medical schools.

Specialist Training for Current and Future Health Needs

In 2007-08, the Government will continue to focus on ensuring Australia continues to train high quality medical specialists. To achieve this, the Department will continue to work with the health professions and the states and territories, to support the training of medical specialists.

In July 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that a system of specialist training be established by January 2008, to support specialist medical training in an expanded range of settings. Health Ministers agreed that this work be informed by the report of the Medical Specialist Training Steering Committee (a committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC)). In 2007-08, the Australian Government will work with the states and territories, medical colleges, health professionals, private and community sector providers and consumers to implement these COAG initiatives.

The Government will also continue to invest in medical specialist programs including the establishment of advanced specialist training posts in rural and regional areas, and structural reform of psychiatric training in Australia. The Government will provide assistance for specialists to re-enter medical specialties following career interruptions, and promote the rural medical workforce.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will work with the states and territories to establish a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions by 1 July 2008. Initially, the scheme will cover the nine health professional groups currently subject to statutory regulation in every state and territory: medical practitioners; nurses and midwives; dentists (including dental therapists, dental hygienists and dental prosthetists); optometrists; pharmacists; physiotherapists; psychologists; osteopaths; and chiropractors.

The scheme will replace the existing state and territory registration boards for these professions. It will also oversee the accreditation of their education and training.

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme was agreed by COAG on 13 April 2007. COAG developed the model for the scheme with extensive stakeholder consultation. Stakeholders will continue to be consulted throughout the implementation of the scheme.

Enhancing the Nursing and Allied Health Workforce

The Government will continue to provide funding through the Nurse Scholarship Program in 2007-08 to financially assist students or practising nurses/midwives to undertake undergraduate or postgraduate study. Funding will also be available for these people to attend conferences, update their skills and qualifications or re-enter the nursing workforce. The Government will fund more than 100 undergraduate scholarships, 200 postgraduate scholarships and up to 100 rural and remote re-entry scholarships.

Furthermore, the Government will continue to support scholarships, re-entry training for former regional or metropolitan nurses and formal training programs for practice nurses, with more than 450 scholarships expected to be awarded in 2007-08.

The Government will provide assistance to students through the Allied Health Scholarships program. It will fund 65 scholarships for study in allied health disciplines in 2007-08, and over 100 postgraduate scholarships annually to help practising allied health professionals continue their professional development. In addition, the Government will invest in a new School of Dentistry and Oral Health at the Charles Sturt University.

The Australian Government will work with the states and territories, and other stakeholders, to progress initiatives agreed to by COAG in July 2006, to ensure a better trained and more responsive health workforce. These include the establishment of the Health Workforce Taskforce through the Health Workforce Principal Committee to AHMAC, to promote and progress health workforce planning and service reform. Initiatives also include implementing a standard national process to assess overseas trained doctors.

Workforce Opportunities for Overseas Trained Doctors in Australia

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to provide assistance for employers and overseas trained doctors in arranging placements of overseas trained doctors. Over 250 places have been made available for recruitment activity, and a further 200 scholarships are expected to be allocated under training and upskilling initiatives. This will result in improving Australia's attractiveness as a preferred destination for skilled medical practitioners.

Indigenous Health Workforce

In 2007-08, the Government will address the development needs of other health workforce groups contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The Government will also focus on improving the effectiveness of training, recruitment and retention measures targeting non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australian health professionals working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care, especially in rural and remote Australia.

The Australian Government will assist the states and territories, and other key stakeholders, to continue to implement and review how the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health will support Indigenous doctors, nurses and other health workers whilst they are studying. This includes the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme, through which dental scholarships to Indigenous students will be created.

Rural Clinical School and University Departments of Rural Health

The Government will continue to support growth at Rural Clinical Schools and University Departments of Rural Health, to deliver more rural training opportunities for students. This will involve providing substantial funding support for operational expenditure at rural training sites, as well as further investment in capital infrastructure development. In 2007-08, the Government will support the establishment of a new rural clinical school in New South Wales, through the University of Wollongong.

Outcome 12 Resourcing

Table 3.1.12 shows how the 2007-08 Budget appropriations translate to total resourcing for Outcome 12, including administered expenses, revenue from government (appropriation), revenue from other sources, and the total price of outputs.

Table 3.1.12: Total Resources for Outcome 12

	Estimated actual 2006-07 \$'000	Budget estimate 2007-08 \$'000
Administered appropriations		
Program 12.1: Rural Workforce		
Appropriation Bill 1	103,379	169,360
	103,379	169,360
Program 12.2: Workforce		
Appropriation Bill 1	32,688	40,750
	32,688	40,750
Total Administered Appropriations	136,067	210,110
Departmental appropriations		
Health and Ageing		
Output Group 1 - Policy Advice	5,711	5,763
Output Group 2 - Program Management	9,599	9,686
Total price from departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	15,310	15,449
Total revenue from government (appropriations) contributing to price of departmental outputs	14,867	15,024
Total revenue from other sources	443	425
Total price from departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	15,310	15,449
Total Price of Outputs for Outcome 12 <i>(Total Revenue from Government and from other sources)</i>	15,310	15,449
Total estimated resourcing for Outcome 12 <i>(Total price of outputs and administered appropriations)</i>	151,377	225,559
	2006-07	2007-08
Average Staffing Level (number)		
Department	125	125

Measures Affecting Outcome 12

A summary of measures affecting this outcome is provided at Table 2.2, Section 2. Measure descriptions are published in full in *Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Measures 2007-08*, available on the Australian Government website at: <www.budget.gov.au>.

Contribution of Administered Programs to Outcome 12

Program 12.1: Rural Workforce

The Rural Workforce program funds initiatives to increase the number of rural health professionals and to ensure they are well trained to practise in these areas. This is achieved by supporting existing rural health professionals and encouraging students of health

disciplines to consider careers in rural and remote areas. The contribution to this outcome is measured by the number of students undertaking training in rural areas; and the number of new graduates choosing to work in rural and remote areas. It is also measured by the number of existing rural health professionals provided with assistance to remain in those areas.

Program 12.2: Workforce

The Workforce program provides funding to increase the supply and retention of health professionals, and to influence their distribution into areas of workforce shortage. This includes short term increases through recruitment and retraining programs, as well as long term initiatives to improve the education and training of the health workforce to meet future needs. The contribution to this outcome can be measured by the number and distribution of the health workforce.

Contribution of Departmental Outputs to Outcome 12

The Department describes its core activities in terms of two output groups: policy advice and program management. Outcome 12 reports on both output groups. Refer to Section 3.1 for more information on output groups.

Performance Information for Outcome 12

Performance information for administered programs, individual outputs and output groups relating to Outcome 12 are summarised in Table 3.2.12.

Table 3.2.12: Key Performance Information for Outcome 12

Performance Information for Administered Programs

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Administered Funding – Health Workforce Capacity Programs		
An expansion of specialist training opportunities in settings outside of public teaching hospitals.	Funding provided to enable an expansion in specialist training settings.	At least 15 new specialist training positions funded in settings outside of public teaching hospitals in 2007-08.
Students of rural origin supported to study allied health disciplines.	Scholarships awarded to rural students in allied health disciplines.	65 new scholarships to be awarded in 2007.
Achievement of the required number of medical students completing a year of rural training.	Percentage figures for students undertaking a year of rural training at fully operational Rural Clinical Schools.	25% of Australian Government supported medical students to complete a year of rural training during their degree.
Expansion of the University Departments of Rural Health Program.	Funding provided to enable an additional university to fully participate in this initiative.	One new University Department of Rural Health established.

Section 3 – Department Outcomes – 12 Health Workforce Capacity

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Administered Funding – Health Workforce Capacity Programs		
Additional suitability qualified overseas trained doctors in outer metropolitan, rural and remote districts of workforce shortage.	<p>a) Number of additional overseas trained doctors in locations of identified shortage.</p> <p>b) Uptake of training and support programs by overseas trained doctors.</p>	<p>a) At least 50% of the placements to be located in outer metropolitan, rural and remote and districts of workforce shortage.</p> <p>b) 200 new scholarships to be awarded in 2007-08.</p>
Cost: \$210.110m		

Performance Information for Departmental Outputs

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 1 – Policy Advice		
Quality, relevant and timely advice for Australian Government decision-making.	Ministerial satisfaction.	Maintain or increase from previous year.
Relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Production of relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Relevant evidence-based policy research produced in a timely manner.
Price: \$5.763m		

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 2 – Program Management		
Administered budget predictions are met and actual expenses vary less than 0.5% from budgeted expenses.	Percentage that actual expenses vary from budgeted expenses.	0.5% variance from budgeted expenses.
Stakeholders to participate in program development.	Opportunities for stakeholder participation through a range of avenues, such as surveys, conferences and meetings.	Stakeholders participated in program development.
Price: \$9.686m		

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Evaluations

The Department does not plan to undertake any evaluations under Outcome 12 in 2007-08.

Major Reviews

The Department does not plan to undertake any major reviews under Outcome 12 in 2007-08.