



National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021–2031

Investing in our medical workforce to meet Australia's health needs

Medical Workforce Reform Advisory Committee

Communique – 21 February 2024

The Medical Workforce Reform Advisory Committee (MWRAC) and invited worker representatives, met on Wednesday 21 February 2024 in Adelaide. The meeting was convened by the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP to discuss medical workforce priorities and implementation of the **National Medical Workforce Strategy** ahead of the establishment of a new medical workforce joint planning and advisory body. Mr Blair Comley PSM, Secretary of the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) also attended the meeting. Professor Jenny May, National Rural Health Alliance, and Associate Professor Andrew Singer, Department of Health and Aged Care, chaired the meeting.

Senator the Hon. Malarndirri McCarthy, Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health and Minister Butler both addressed the meeting, highlighting the Australian Government's priority reforms to improve equity and access to health, including: investment in Strengthening Medicare and bulk billing; the *Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings* (Kruk review); growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and improving cultural safety; *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce – Scope of Practice Review*, and the *Working Better for Medicare* (distribution levers) Review.

Dr Robyn Lawrence, Chief Executive SA Health and Health Workforce Taskforce (HWT) Deputy Chair, presented on HWT joint work, including refreshed medical workforce governance arrangements, implementation of National Health Practitioner Ombudsman report recommendations and the Australian Medical Council Communication Protocol, and implementation of the Kruk Review Final Report recommendations. Ms Jaclyn Newmann, DoHAC, presented on medical workforce statistics. Attendees agreed more granular and shared data is crucial for addressing medical workforce distribution challenges.

Ms Donna Burns, CEO of the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) presented on challenges and opportunities in relation to increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce and improving cultural safety. Attendees noted creating culturally safe environments is a shared responsibility.



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Independent reviewers Professor Sabina Knight and Adjunct Professor Mick Reid presented on the *Working Better for Medicare* review and Professor Mark Cormack presented on the *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce Review*. Attendees were encouraged to engage with the reviews in relation to improving utilisation and distribution of the medical workforce, through online submissions and by email to:

workingbetterformedicarereview@health.gov.au; scopeofpracticereview@health.gov.au.

Associate Professor Susan Wearne, DoHAC, presented on the draft Hospital Registrar and Career Medical Officer Framework which will be provided to MWRAC members for endorsement prior to consideration by the HWT.

The discussions from this meeting will inform a draft workplan for the new medical workforce joint planning and advisory body to consider and take forward with the sector. MWRAC business will continue out of session until the new body is established in 2024. The Department of Health and Aged Care is progressing formal establishment of the new body, expected later this year.

For further information and enquiries please contact **MWRAC@health.gov.au**.

