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Intern changes welcome, but more to do

Medical Deans today welcomed the comments by the Chair of AHMAC, Mr Kim Snowball, that action would be taken on internships for this year's graduating medical students but said more work was needed for a long-term solution.

'This is a first step in what must be a long-term solution,' said Professor Justin Beilby, President of Medical Deans. 'I acknowledge that AHMAC is actively monitoring its capacity to support additional intern places for 2013, including places for international students.'

'We are firmly of the view that additional intern places can be found in new settings including the private and non-government sector, and we will support arrangements needed to ensure accreditation of those places for 2013.'

'As importantly we need to formally define our medical workforce needs so we can plan for the right number of medical graduates in order for Australia to be self-sufficient in doctors by 2025.'

Professor Beilby said further discussions were needed to ensure international medical students already in the system, who will graduate in coming years, could get access to an internship. All graduating medical students must complete a 12-month internship before they can practise as a doctor.

'We look forward to working in partnership with AHMAC and the jurisdictions to ensure we can find the best long-term solutions and collectively best meet Australia's medical workforce needs.'

Professor Beilby said that since 2005, Medical Deans had established a comprehensive database that followed medical students across Australia to see how their careers developed and where they chose to practise medicine. This study has been a key resource informing workforce planning.

Professor Beilby said all Australian-trained medical students, including those from overseas who paid their own fees, offered the most ethical and effective way of ensuring Australia was self-sufficient in doctors.

Medical Deans is made up of the Deans of Australia's 18 university medical schools and the two New Zealand schools.

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