



MEDIA RELEASE
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Australia needs more doctors in the bush; not another urban medical school.

Medical Deans is dismayed to see the Federal Government has committing public money to build a new urban medical school in Western Australia (WA) as announced by the Prime Minister yesterday.

The President of Medical Deans, Professor Peter Smith, says ‘this is a strange decision not based on the healthcare needs of Australia.’

The evidence suggests that at present we have the right number of doctors graduating in Australia to meet tomorrow’s needs. The problem confronting healthcare in Australia is that people living in rural and regional Australia have much poorer health outcomes than those living in the city, often due to an imbalance in provision of medical care. The answer is to train more medical students and doctors in regional Australia to correct this imbalance. The expensive establishment of another urban medical school is not going to address this problem.

Several medical schools have developed proposals to expand the rural recruitment and training of medical students and assist in the regional vocational training of doctors to address this problem for a fraction of the cost of the new city-based school but have been told “there is no money.”

Professor Smith said, “the answer to Australia’s rural and regional health problems is not the establishment of small, new, expensive urban medical schools, whether in WA or in other states. Medical Deans is ready to work with government to help address the unfairness in health outcomes for people in the bush.”

Medical Deans is the peak professional body representing entry-level medical education, training and research and is made up of the Deans of Australia’s 18 university medical schools and the two New Zealand schools.

More information, CEO – Professor Judy Searle 0498 138 035 or Professor Peter Smith 02 9385 2451

Medical Workforce Facts

In 2014 **3549 doctors graduated** from **19 existing medical schools**

In 2014 there were **3737 commencing medical students** in Australia with **9.2% in WA schools**

In 2014 the **population in WA** was 2.589M (**10.98% of Australian population**)

In 2013 there were 84,613 **employed doctors** in Australia, 8489 (**10.03% employed in WA**)

In 2013 nationally there were 364.9 employed doctors per FTE population compared to **349.0 doctors per FTE population in WA**

In 2012 there were 2950 **Intern places** in Australia with 282 (**9.6% in WA**)

From the Medical Schools Outcomes Database survey (Response rates 50-60% of all interns)

In 2013 87% of medical graduates from WA medical schools took up an intern position in WA compared with 78% of NSW graduates and 57% of Tasmanian graduates taking up internships in NSW and Tasmania respectively