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## Placement poverty does not discriminate across professions

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand (Medical Deans) welcomes the recognition of the financial impact that clinical placements have on students, especially in the midst of cost-of-living and accommodation cost rises. The introduction of the Commonwealth Prac Payment for those studying nursing, midwifery, and social work, is a positive development. However, limiting the payment to these assumes that only some professions are impacted.

Medical Deans' President, Professor Michelle Leech AM, said "Students from all health professions can be affected by placement poverty – it does not discriminate".

"We are seeing an increasing proportion of students from a diverse range of backgrounds studying medicine, for example, from lower SES backgrounds, those who are first in family to go to university, and First Nations students who in 2023 comprised 4.2% of domestic medical school commencements. Over a third of students entering medicine in 2023 were from a rural background" said Professor Leech.

"Ensuring medicine is a profession that is open to all, no matter their background or financial position, is an important change we have been working to bring about and intend to further progress. It is vital that cost-of-living support is available to the students who need it to support their successful completion."

Medical Deans expressed their concern that groups of students learning together in multidisciplinary groups could face a situation where some but not others are getting this support.

"At a time when teamwork and multidisciplinary care has never had more of a focus, this could be extremely divisive" reflected Professor Leech.

"These cost-of-living allowances will help many students individually and will support the development of a future health workforce more representative of the communities they serve and with a broader range of experiences, insights and understanding to meet the health care needs of all Australians," said Professor Leech. "It is important that this allowance be extended to all health professional students on practical placements in financial need."

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*Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand Inc. represents and supports the 24 medical schools across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand in their cutting-edge medical education, work-integrated training, and research to recruit, develop and nurture outstanding medical graduates to enable our communities to continue to access world-class health services.*

*Medical Deans' [annual survey of medical graduates](#) provides valuable information and insights on the make-up of our future doctors, including demographics, education, experience, and future career preferences.*

<https://medicaldeans.org.au/>