



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Overseas-trained doctors: we need them and they deserve our support

Australian Divisions of Practice (ADGP) has commended the Federal Government for increasing the numbers of skilled migrants coming to Australia.

ADGP CEO Kate Carnell said the improved targeting of the Government's skilled migration stream has meant the number of migrant doctors has almost tripled over a one-year period, and migrant nurses have gone up by 40 per cent.

"Australia's health care sector is facing drastic shortages and this boost to the workforce makes a real difference on the ground to the capacity of health care services around the country," Ms Carnell said.

"These new migrants are playing a crucial role in addressing medical workforce shortages. Without them, many rural and regional areas in Australia would be left with no GPs. Indeed, these doctors usually work in the areas that struggle to attract medical professionals – places that would be in real trouble without them.

"It is extremely unfortunate that the 'Dr Death' scandal had prompted racist generalisations about overseas-trained doctors in some communities. Due to the poor track record of a very small number of doctors, international medical graduates (IMGs) have been given a bad name, and they simply don't deserve it. The majority are well-trained, skilled professionals with a dedicated approach to patient care."

Ms Carnell says governments and the health sector have to work together to ensure IMGs receive the support they need to settle in Australia and can transfer their skills to a new environment.

"Of course there must be assessment processes to ensure GPs arriving in Australia have appropriate training. But our focus should also be on providing IMGs and their families with adequate support once they are here working in our communities."

The Divisions Network was already playing an important role in supporting IMGs through various education, training and peer programs, Ms Carnell said.

"But more needs to be done to ensure newly-arrived doctors feel supported and welcomed."

For more information contact Jane Castles, 02 6228 0822 or 0412 392 577.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.



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