



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Not a numbers game: ADGP Response to Productivity Commission Position Paper - *Australia's Health Workforce*

ADGP has welcomed many of the key proposals in the Productivity Commission Position Paper – *Australia's Health Workforce*.

"Our submission to the Productivity Commission argued that fixing the serious challenges facing the health system is not just about numbers and higher rebates. It is time for a serious investment in primary health care policy and systems reform. We are pleased the Commission has taken this up" said ADGP CEO Kate Carnell.

"Many areas of the health sector are under strain. The Commission has recognised the complexity of the workforce challenges facing the system and the importance of taking a systemic approach to change the way we think about health care and the way we deliver services".

"It is time to take a serious look at new models of health service delivery. How the system is financed, organised and supported can make a difference. Incentives that reward different modes of service can build a system that delivers better health outcomes and value for the taxpayer dollar" said Ms Carnell.

"ADGP agrees with the Commission's view that there are currently limited incentives under the MBS for delegation of routine tasks to other health professionals" said Dr Rob Walters, ADGP Chair.

"As we argued in our submission, ADGP strongly supports reform to the MBS to include more incentives to promote team-based approaches in the general practice setting. It also facilitates change in way GPs think and practice".

"We need a primary health care system organised and funded to support those best equipped to deliver a service, to do so. For example using practice nurses for screening, preventive care, care coordination and some appropriate minor procedures can help to "free-up" GPs for more complex and acute diagnostic and patient management issues" said Dr Walters.

"In addition to practice nursing incentives, other programs such as Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care and Medicare Plus are increasingly involving allied health providers in the delivery of care in the primary care setting as part of a care plan developed by the GP".

"We need more incentives like this to promote more multidisciplinary care to make much better use of our existing and emerging health workforce."

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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“To this end, ADGP also supports the principle of interdisciplinary training regimes in the Commission’s education and training proposals as a means of promoting team based approaches. The concept of a single national accreditation agency would require careful consideration”

“It is vital that we get our workforce planning and policy right. ADGP supports the proposal to better focus and streamline workforce planning mechanisms”

“A strong primary health care system served by a multidisciplinary workforce with general practice as the lynchpin is the key to a viable and effective health system for the future. I would like to see the Commission pull all this together in the general practice setting” Dr Walters said

“We know that systems which rely more on primary health care and general practice than on specialist and hospital care are more efficient, cost effective, and accessible and result in healthier Australians”.

“Workforce issues in regional, rural and remote communities are acute. The paper is short on systemic solutions to improving health workforce outcomes in these areas. This is an area ADGP will provide further comment in our November submission after consultation with the Divisions Network”.

“ADGP supports the principle of workforce innovation and service integration that involves working across current professional and service boundaries”

“It is disappointing that there is no mention of Divisions of General Practice in the paper. By holding and managing funds from different levels of government, Divisions can put in place integrated services on the ground and overcome one of the most vexing issues in the health sector – the Commonwealth-State divide”

“The Divisions are a uniquely placed infrastructure that are already delivering workforce solutions. ADGP will continue to urge more effective use of the Divisions Network to address the workforce crisis in our response to the Position Paper in November”

“A coherent national Primary Health Care Strategy goes hand-in-hand with measures to support and sustain a viable health workforce”.

“ADGP will be launching a *Primary Health Care Position Statement* at the Annual Divisions of General Practice Forum. We have developed the *Statement* over the last year in consultation with the Divisions Network. It will be our blueprint for primary health care reform and contribution to the national primary health care policy debate”.

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