

APHA Position Paper: Workforce Taskforce

Purpose

The Workforce Taskforce assists and advises the APHA Board on private hospital workforce issues particularly in identifying and pursuing opportunities to engage with government on workforce matters. The objective of the Taskforce is to identify and pursue opportunities to engage with government, at the political and bureaucratic level, on workforce issues in the private hospital sector, including by representing APHA on National and State –based workforce planning bodies as well as ad hoc committees where necessary; contributing to relevant studies, reviews and consultation processes in the workforce arena, and liaising with other APHA Taskforces and Committees, such as Psychiatric and Rehabilitation to ensure that APHA presents and promotes a consistent and co-ordinated policy position.

State of the Health Sector Workforce in Australia

A steady and sufficient workforce is at the very core of private hospital activity in Australia. It is necessary for hospitals to have an appropriately qualified and trained workforce to ensure that they can deliver services in a manner that is professional and stable.

The sector is currently experiencing critical workforce shortages, unsustainable wage increases under Australia's Fair Work Award architecture, and a general increase in the costs of doing business. There is a crisis of viability. It is necessary to find and discuss opportunities to manage these challenges.

APHA continues to advocate for the revision and removal of the 10 year moratorium on overseas trained practitioners, reform the District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) calculus to ensure a more appropriate distribution of the workforce that accounts for patient flows and sub-specialties, expand access to government-funded training programs, promote and integrate training on new technologies such as artificial intelligence and surgical robotics into existing training frameworks, improved labour market data collection and analysis to inform workforce planning, and provide advice to government on initiatives and funding to support a healthy and viable private hospital sector workforce.

Priorities

The APHA Workforce Taskforce engages with a wide range of matters including:

- Workforce shortages
- Cost pressures
- The 10-year moratorium on overseas trained practitioners and skilled migration policy, including the District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) program
- The Kruk Independent Review of Overseas Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings report
- Data collection on labour market trends
- Training and continuous professional development including on and related to artificial Intelligence (AI), telehealth, and new technologies (including robotics)
- Funding pathways for training programs such as the Specialist Training Program (STP)
- Regional facilities and workforce development
- Any other relevant matters

Chair

Mr Brett Goods

Chief Executive Officer

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