

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Planning agency needed to ensure healthcare workforce is where it is needed

Australia's medical leaders are [meeting in Canberra today](#) to discuss the most pressing issues affecting Australia's health system, including how to address the problem of a diminishing and maldistributed healthcare workforce.

The AMA's [pre-budget submission](#) on Australia's healthcare workforce provides costed solutions to current workforce shortages, which are leading to more Australians struggling to receive timely care.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said building a sustainable healthcare workforce was essential to future-proofing Australia's healthcare system.

"We know right now there are many regions across Australia where access to healthcare remains a challenge due to the maldistribution and shortages of healthcare professionals," Professor Robson said.

"A maldistributed and insufficient workforce leads to Australians facing prolonged wait times for appointments, delayed diagnosis and a backlog of care, which adds up to substandard patient health outcomes.

"Health workforce planning in Australia has languished since the abolition of the former Health Workforce Australia in 2014 and we have not seen any modelling or planning reports since 2017, and the results of this neglect are becoming more apparent every day."

The AMA's budget submission proposes a \$1 billion commitment to create an independent National Health Workforce Planning Agency.

This aligns with the recommendations of the 2021–2031 National Medical Workforce Strategy that calls for a joint medical workforce planning and advisory body with sufficient authority and expertise to advise and make recommendations in relation to the size and structure of the medical workforce.

A National Health Workforce Planning Agency would ensure the healthcare workforce meets the current and future healthcare needs of the population, through planning, coordination, and policy advice.

Professor Robson said the agency would consider factors such as population demographics, healthcare trends, technological advancements, and the changing nature of diseases to make informed decisions about workforce requirements.

"A National Health Workforce Planning Agency would ensure Australia has a health workforce with the right skills, in the right locations, to meet future community needs and demand.

"If governments want to get serious about prioritising the health of all Australians — no matter where they live — then a workforce planning agency makes absolute sense.

"We need evidence-based policy that will minimise wasted expenditure while enabling us to proactively and efficiently adapt to changing healthcare demands, ensuring all Australians have access to high-quality healthcare."

[Read the AMA's pre-budget submissions](#)

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