



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Prac payments to med students could help address access issues

The Australian Medical Association has called on the Australian Government to include medical students in the Commonwealth Prac Payments scheme to help improve access to care, particularly in rural and remote areas.

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said the AMA has written to the Education Minister, Jason Clare, expressing disappointment that medical students had been excluded from the payment scheme.

The scheme — announced in the 2024–25 federal budget — provides means tested support to nursing and midwifery students undertaking mandatory placements.

Dr McMullen urged the government to amend the scheme to include medical students, saying including medical students would improve community access to health care, particularly in underserved rural and remote communities.

“Medical students are required to undertake about 2000 hours of unpaid clinical placements,” Dr McMullen said.

“The costs associated with this unpaid placement are a significant barrier to participation among current and potential students from low socio-economic and rural backgrounds.

“Evidence also tells us that medical students that practice in a rural and regional area are more likely to stay in a rural and regional areas. Helping these students stay and undertake their practice in rural and remote communities will mean more doctors in areas that struggle the most with access.”

Dr McMullen said Australia’s medical workforce was maldistributed across geographies and specialties, making it harder for patients to access the care that they need in a timely fashion.

“Providing means tested access to these payments for medical students would be an important step towards addressing this growing challenge,” she said.

“The AMA is committed to improving access to care for the community and while there is no single solution, this proposed reform along with other well targeted policy initiatives can make a real difference.

“We will continue to work with the government on delivering a medical workforce that meets community need, having well developed policies that target medical student intakes, prevocational training places, GP training and non-GP specialist training places. “

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