Overall summary of IMG surveys

Challenges

1. **Cultural and communication barriers**
   a. Language proficiency, including medical English and local slang.
   b. Understanding and adapting to Australian cultural norms and patient expectations.
   c. Overcoming discrimination and bias from colleagues and patients.
2. **System and workflow adaptation**
   a. Navigating the Australian healthcare system, including Medicare and local hospital workflows.
   b. Understanding local medical practices, documentation, and regulatory requirements.
   c. Adjusting to different clinical practices and expectations compared to their home countries.
3. **Professional integration and support**
   a. Lack of adequate orientation and mentoring.
   b. Insufficient support in understanding professional roles and responsibilities.
   c. Difficulty in balancing clinical duties with ongoing education and training requirements.
4. **Personal and social challenges**
   a. Isolation and lack of social support networks.
   b. Managing personal life challenges, including family relocation and integration.
   c. Dealing with the pressure of exams and continuous professional development.
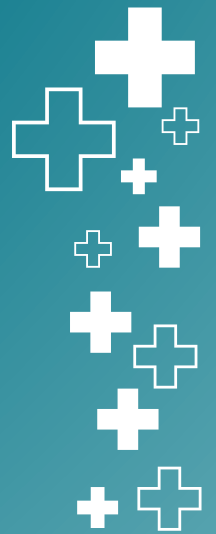
"If there was clear understanding of the pathway towards progression, it would have helped me to plan my career better and would have saved my family from being subjected to unnecessary stress and turmoil."

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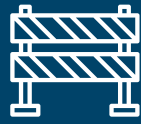
Barriers

1. **Social and cultural isolation**
   a. Feeling isolated from their cultural and social networks.
   b. Lack of community integration and support.
   c. Limited social and recreational opportunities in rural areas.
2. **Professional and career development**
   a. Limited opportunities for career advancement and professional development.
   b. Perception of better work-life balance and career prospects in urban areas.
   c. Challenges in accessing further training and specialisation opportunities.
3. **Family and personal considerations**
   a. Concerns about the quality of education and social opportunities for their children.
   b. Employment opportunities for spouses and family members.
   c. Desire to be closer to larger communities with more amenities and services.
4. **Systematic barriers**
   a. Increased bureaucratic and regulatory challenges, including delays in registration and accreditation processes.
   b. Persistent issues with discrimination and bias within the healthcare system.
   c. Growing workload and stress due to staff shortages and high patient demands.
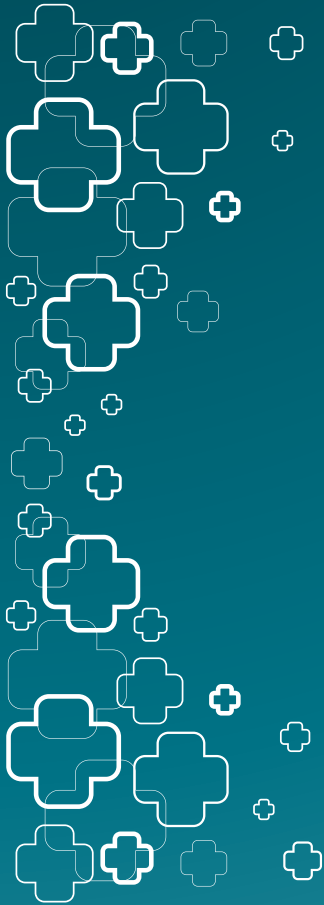
"We met some lovely people who remain friends but also experienced some of the worst workplace behaviour of my career, which together with the racism of rural Australia and its impact on my children, led to us moving to a city."

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Areas for action

1. **Comprehensive orientation and training**
   a. Structured orientation programs covering the Australian healthcare system, cultural norms, and professional expectations.
   b. Language and communication skills training, including medical English.
   c. Mentoring and shadowing opportunities with experienced local doctors.
2. **Supportive supervision and mentorship**
   a. Access to dedicated supervisors and mentors who understand the challenges faced by IMGs.
   b. Regular feedback and guidance to help IMGs navigate their new roles.
   c. Peer support networks to share experiences and advice.
3. **Personal and family support**
   a. Assistance with settling into the community, including housing, schooling, childcare and social integration.
   b. Support for family members, including employment opportunities for spouses and educational support for children.
   c. Access to psychological and counselling services to manage stress and cultural adjustment.
4. **Commitment to change**
   a. A commitment to change with clear key performance indicators and resources directed to drive improvements in conditions for IMGs over the next five years.
   b. A co-ordinated approach to reducing bureaucracy and discrimination, and to improving support for IMGs and their families.
   c. Transparency and accountability to report on efforts to improve conditions and address the core issues faced by IMGs.
5. **Healthcare system improvements**
   a. Increased awareness and recognition of the importance of IMGs in the healthcare system.
   b. Development of more structured support and training programs for IMGs.
   c. Better integration of IMGs into professional networks and communities.
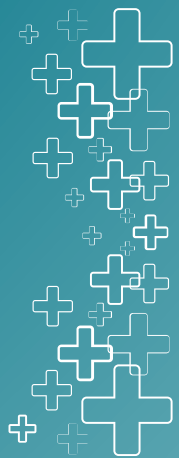
"Always have to go above and beyond to prove that we are worthy of the position we have been given."

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