

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 1 September 2025

Breaking down barriers: AMA calls for urgent reforms to support IMGs

The Australian Medical Association is calling for immediate reforms to better support Australia's international medical graduates (IMGs).

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said IMGs play a vital role in delivering healthcare, yet outdated red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies are hindering them and their families, undermining the nation's ability to meet growing healthcare needs.

"IMGs are a critical part of our healthcare system — particularly in regional, rural and remote communities — but their pathway to being able to practice in Australia remains unnecessarily convoluted, costly, and opaque," Dr McMullen said.

"Despite their significant contribution being widely acknowledged, the current system fails to provide IMGs and their families with the support, transparency, and co-ordination they deserve.

"Many report feeling trapped in a complex and confusing registration process, often having to work outside of medicine while awaiting registration.

"Discrimination and anti-competitive practices only deepen their frustration and sense of exclusion, delaying their integration and eroding trust in the system itself.

"Qualified doctors are left feeling stuck, navigating a maze of duplicate documentation, inconsistent requirements, and vague job descriptions — at a time when Australia faces widespread medical workforce shortages that are only expected to worsen."

To better understand the challenges facing IMGs, the [AMA surveyed its members](#) and published a [new report](#), outlining their lived experiences, the systemic barriers they encounter, and opportunities for reform.

IMGs now comprise 53 per cent of Australia's rural medical workforce and account for more than 50 per cent of all general practitioners nationwide. This trend extends to specialist roles as well, with more than 30 per cent of Australia's specialists having received their medical training overseas.

With Australia's reliance on IMGs only expected to increase, the AMA is urging governments, regulators, and stakeholders across the health system to work together to:

- streamline and simplify the IMG application and registration process
- eliminate duplication and outdated administrative procedures
- provide transparent, upfront information regarding job placements and support structures
- align Australia's approach with best-practice international standards.

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"Other countries have modernised their approach, and Australia must not fall behind," Dr McMullen said.

"It is essential IMGs have access to the support they need so they can thrive, not just survive.

"It's time to break down the barriers and build a healthcare system that works for everyone."

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