



**AMA SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO BUILD A MEDICAL
 WORKFORCE THAT MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS**

More than 80 participants have taken part in the AMA Medical Workforce and Training Summit to discuss key medical workforce challenges, including shortages in some specialty areas, maldistribution, and the lack of training places for medical graduates.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that the day-long summit brought together representatives of doctors in training, rural health groups, medical schools, prevocational and specialist training bodies, private healthcare organisations, medical registration and accreditation agencies, State AMAs, and Commonwealth, State, and Territory Health Departments.

“For many Australians, access to a doctor remains a problem, particularly in rural and remote areas,” Dr Gannon said.

“Fifteen years ago, the problem was that we did not have enough doctors. Today, we are now graduating record numbers of medical students, but do not have enough postgraduate training places in the areas and specialties where they are most needed.

“The take home message from the day was that Australia does not need any more medical school places. There was a clear recognition that the focus needs to shift away from pumping more students into medical schools towards giving medical students more opportunities to train in rural areas, as well as delivering postgraduate training places in the areas and specialties where they are needed.

“We need smarter policies than we have seen from governments in the past. All too often, the opening of a new medical school, or importing more doctors from overseas, is seen as the solution to our medical workforce needs.

“This mindset is driven by short-term political needs, rather than the long-term health needs of our communities.”

A number of key areas for action were identified, and a final report will be released in coming weeks.

“The mood of the Summit was very positive. There was constructive debate, and what emerged was a range of ideas and strategies to tackle key medical challenges, many of which had broad support,” Dr Gannon said.

“The Summit report will help inform future AMA policy development and highlight potential future directions to key policy makers.”

The Summit was held in Melbourne on Saturday, 3 March.

8 March 2018

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