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**NEW NATIONAL MEDICAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY WELCOME,
 BUT LONG OVERDUE**

The AMA congratulates COAG Health Ministers who today agreed to work collaboratively to fund, develop, and implement a new strategy for a national medical workforce to meet Australia’s future healthcare needs.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the new strategy – the first since the National Health Workforce Strategic Framework 14 years ago – will allow the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to cooperate more closely in planning and coordinating our future medical workforce.

“It is vital that this strategy addresses and overcomes the many workforce challenges facing Australia’s medical professionals,” Dr Bartone said.

“These include the maldistribution of the medical workforce, workforce shortages in some specialty areas, and the lack of prevocational and specialist training places for medical graduates once they have left medical school.

“The Commonwealth is responsible for funding medical schools and general practice training, and has programs to support medical training in community and private settings, but most medical training still takes place in State and Territory public hospitals.

“We need a seamless process and we need an end to the blame game over funding.”

Dr Bartone said the AMA has been calling for the new strategy for many years, and it was a key recommendation from the 2018 AMA Medical Workforce and Training Summit.

The AMA Summit also called for:

- better support for generalism;
- a focus on matching training with community need;
- more opportunities for specialist training in rural areas;
- the development of a strong rural training pathway; and
- supporting careers in undersupplied specialties.

“A national medical workforce strategy, developed with strong input from the profession, is critical to getting all stakeholders on the same page to achieve policies that will deliver the future medical workforce that the community needs,” Dr Bartone said.

“The new strategy is welcome news for our patients, our local communities, and our specialists-in-training.”

The Report from the 2018 AMA Medical Workforce and Training Summit is at <https://ama.com.au/medical-workforce-training-summit>

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