

**Australian Medical Association Limited**  
**ABN 37 008 426 793**

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**AMA WELCOMES BONDED MEDICAL PROGRAM REFORMS**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that important reforms to medical bonding programs will benefit medical graduates and the rural and under-serviced communities they will serve as doctors.

The Parliament yesterday approved the *Health Insurance Amendment (Bonded Medical Programs Reform) Bill 2019*, which will completely overhaul the Bonded Medical Places (BMP) and Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) programs, as announced in the 2018/19 Federal Budget.

The reformed arrangements will apply to all new program participants from January 2020.

Dr Bartone said the changes follow extensive lobbying by the AMA Council of Doctors in Training (AMACDT) and the AMA and will effectively standardise conditions for bonded medical graduates, moving away from the current contract-based arrangements.

“Both the MRBS and BMP schemes have failed to make meaningful progress towards addressing workforce shortages in rural areas and other underserviced communities,” Dr Bartone said.

“This was largely due to their inflexible program design and failure to recognise that people’s circumstances can change dramatically from the time they enter medical school to the period when they must complete their return of service obligations.

“The new arrangements will provide participants with greater flexibility, more certainty in relation to where they can work in the future, and will require much less red tape and compliance.

“This is good news for bonded medical graduates and for communities in desperate need of local doctors and medical services,” Dr Bartone said.

In working with the Government to design the new program, the AMA consulted widely with members who were participating in the BMP and MRBS schemes. The AMA is confident that the new arrangements will better support bonded medical graduates and help improve access to vital medical care in those communities where they are needed.

The AMA will continue to work with the Department of Health to finalise the implementation of these reforms.

12 September 2019

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761  
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/ama\\_media](http://twitter.com/ama_media)  
 Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>  
 Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>  
 Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>