



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 14 June 2013

COMMONWEALTH MUST DO MORE ON INTERNS

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today called on the Commonwealth to fund at least 100 additional medical intern positions in the private sector in 2014.

Mrs Skinner told the Standing Council on Health (SCoH) meeting in Sydney that the Commonwealth must carry more of the load – but Federal Health Minister Tanya Plibersek did not respond with any undertaking to the meeting.

“I’m disappointed that the Federal Health Minister has yet to make a commitment to funding extra intern positions for the coming year,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Certainty is what is needed from the Commonwealth, not more setbacks.”

Health ministers supported Mrs Skinner’s proposition that the nation needs a long term solution to ensure medical graduates complete their registration.

“NSW is again boosting funding to \$105m next year so 954 young doctors will gain internships in this state,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This is approximately a third of the medical graduates in Australia – but we still need more places. So today, state and territory health ministers called on the Commonwealth to share the load by funding 100 additional medical intern placements in 2014 for doctors who will end up working as general practitioners or in private hospitals, not in our public system.”

Mrs Skinner told the SCoH that NSW leads the nation in funding intern positions. In 2013, it funded 927 interns. Next year it will train 954 interns – a commitment of \$105 million per annum. By comparison, the Commonwealth offered to pay for 100 positions for the 2013 clinical year but only ended up funding 22 positions.

“NSW continues to honour its commitment to offering internship positions to all Commonwealth-supported medical graduates,” Mrs Skinner said.

“I urge the Commonwealth not only to fund the additional 100 places for the private sector in 2014 but also to make its position clear before the first round of offers commences on 29 July so all interns have certainty and clarity about their future,” she said.

The Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) has asked the NSW Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) to undertake a national intern audit and

data collection process for the 2014 intern intake. NSW is chairing the national medical intern working group, which will oversee this process.

“By collecting the data we will have a clear picture of the number of intern positions available to offer 2013 medical graduates,” Mrs Skinner said.

“What I do know is that it cannot continue fall to NSW to do the heavy lifting in intern placement.

“In February, NSW initiated and hosted a national summit to address the challenges of funding the future medical workforce, especially interns. NSW is a leader in this field - it is time for the Commonwealth to do more to share the load,” Mrs Skinner said.