



Health Workforce
Queensland

Supporting Primary Health Care in Rural Communities

10 May 2005

Health Workforce Study
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Health Workforce Study

Health Workforce Queensland, formerly known as the Queensland Rural Medical Support Agency (QRMSA), is a rural workforce agency, established in 1998 and funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. A forerunner of the current organization was the Queensland Rural Divisions Coordinating Unit (QRDCU). Our purpose is:

- To facilitate the recruitment, retention and quality of general medical practitioners and primary health care teams in rural and remote Queensland communities.

Our primary objectives are:

- To increase the number of GP services and increase access to GP services in rural and remote Queensland
- Retain GPs in rural and remote Queensland
- Support upskilling of GPs and other supporting health professionals in rural and remote Queensland
- Develop sustainable models for general practice in rural and remote Queensland
- Establish benchmark workforce data and research to inform and direct policy.

In line with our purpose and objectives, Health Workforce Queensland has a considerable deal of expertise and experience in working with rural and remote communities and general practice. Additionally, we maintain very accurate data in relation to medical service provision in rural and remote communities in Queensland.

We would welcome an opportunity to speak with representatives from the Productivity Commission in relation to this study and will develop a submission following the release of your Issues paper.

Health Workforce Queensland has also undertaken considerable research in looking at factors that impact on medical service provision in rural and remote communities and some possible solutions to

address these. We have enclosed two relatively recent publications that your Commission may find useful:

Queensland Rural Medical Support Agency. (2004). *Solutions for the provision of primary care to rural and remote communities in Queensland*. Brisbane: QRMSA.

Health Workforce Queensland. (2004). *Overview of the Queensland General Practice Workforce*. Brisbane: HWQ.

The first of these looks at institutional and legislative barriers and some possible solutions while the second explores current medical service provision by gender, age category and Fulltime Workload Equivalent based on Health Insurance Commission data.

We trust you will find these research reports useful and as indicated previously, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives from your Commission during their next round of stakeholder consultations in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

C.J. Mitchell

CHRIS J. MITCHELL
Chief Executive Officer