

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
HEALTH WORKFORCE REVIEW

Submission by the
Tasmanian School of Medicine
&
Faculty of Health Science
University of Tasmania

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The Tasmanian School of Medicine (TSoM) and the Faculty of Health Science support the issues detailed in the submissions of the Committee of Deans of Australian Medical Schools and the Australian Council of Deans of Health Science. It is noted that the general issues applying to the medical and allied health professions apply equally to nursing.

In particular, we emphasise there is need to coordinate health professional education across its continuum from initial qualification, through specialist training to continuing education and professional development.

There is also need for national planning and coordination to bring rationality to a system which has a multiplicity of providers, accrediting bodies and financial arrangements. While it may be desirable to simplify these arrangements, at a minimum, it is imperative that there is some overall planning and oversight of both health professional education and the health professional workforce.. A National body, such as a National Education and Training Council could fulfil the role of coordinating education while allowing flexibility at regional level to respond to any particular circumstances that may exist eg rural or remote location, population and epidemiological characteristics.

The health professional workforce should be more flexible with fewer constraints imposed by discipline-based professional organizations. Greater opportunity to move from VET to tertiary and vocational training should be provided.

Major impediments to health education and workforce reform are perpetuated by the organisation of the health system with responsibilities divided (and not coordinated) between Australian Government Departments, between Commonwealth and State and Territory jurisdictions and their various departments, between the VET, University and professional College sectors and between the public and private sectors. These can only be addressed through a National approach which engages the major stakeholders and moves beyond cost shifting and “buck-passing”.