

AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION POSITION PAPER

FURTHER COMMENTS

**FRANK PAYNE, NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA**

In general terms the Position Paper addresses most of the pressing issues relating to the Health Workforce and although Pharmacy rarely is mentioned we can relate to the problems that are raised.

REGISTRATION (P114)

I support the concept of National Registration and by inference a single national register of pharmacists. There are currently eight registers on pharmacists in Australia and although there is full mutual recognition between the States and Territories there is still the problem of multiple registration fees and, occasionally, delays in a practitioner taking up a position.

EDUCATION and TRAINING

For over a hundred years there were six Schools of Pharmacy in Australia. Within the last six to eight years this has ballooned to seventeen and the existing schools have significantly increased the number of undergraduates. Certainly there has been a shortage of pharmacists but I am concerned that the drivers for opening these new schools has been the financial imperatives of the various universities rather than the long-term needs of the profession and the community.

While there is currently a shortage of pharmacists there are signs that the increase in the number of graduates will alleviate this in the near future and could even lead to a situation of over-supply.

I would support a central planning body that reviewed the number of placements for undergraduates in the Health Professions and allocated funding on the basis of need.

CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

Further to the comments above on Education & Training, the vast increase in the number of undergraduates has led to the situation where there is a significant shortage of sites for placement of students both during their undergraduate course and for their post-graduate training. It has reached the stage, in some States, that there are more students than there are pharmacies to accept them for training.

The solution to this would appear to reduce the number of students, and this may not be desirable, or to offer financial inducements for pharmacists to participate in their training.

Frank Payne OAM
National Vice President
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
0419 230 587