

1 March, 2017

The Secretary,

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,

I am Jim Cramb. I worked as medical physicist at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne for 43 years from 1971 to 2014. From 2000-2014, I was Director of the Physical Sciences Department. The primary role of the department is to provide support to the Department of Radiation Oncology for the treatment of cancer with radiation (radiotherapy).

Over my career, I have seen dramatic advances in the practice of radiotherapy. The advent of computer controlled treatment machines, CT scanners, computerized treatment planning systems, and accurate positioning and localizing devices means that radiotherapy is now much more effective than in the past. Higher doses of radiation can be accurately directed at tumours, thereby increasing cure and control rates.

In developed countries, the progression from basic radiotherapy to '3-dimensional conformal radiotherapy' took place in the 1980s and 90s. A specialized form of radiotherapy, called Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy (IMRT), was developed in the mid 1990s, and is now widely used. It has become accepted as the standard of care for certain tumour types, including prostate and head and neck cancers.

However, many radiotherapy departments in developing countries, do not have access to this newer technology. Countries such as Australia can play a vital role in assisting other countries through education, training and development programs, and mentoring of professionals. Since its establishment in 1972, the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA), under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has proven to be a very effective means of achieving this objective. There has been a large number of successful projects in priority areas such as agriculture, health, industry and environmental protection. In my field, there have been important projects in the use of radiation for diagnosis and treatment, and the training of medical physicists.

I have been privileged to be closely involved in RCA project 6072, which aims to strengthen IMRT in the RCA region. I convened the first regional training course for this project at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Sep 2015, and was a faculty member ('IAEA expert') at subsequent training courses in Jakarta (Mar 2016) and Manila (Sep 2016). It has been very rewarding to be able to meet and teach key radiation oncologists and medical physicists from all countries in the RCA region. The participants clearly benefit greatly from the opportunity to attend these training courses. They then pass on the knowledge they have gained, by sharing with local staff, liaising with administrators and government, and contributing to national training programs.

As an Australian, I feel proud when my country does what it can to assist other countries, particularly our 'neighbours'. The RCA is invaluable in providing a strong, proven framework

to facilitate the conduct of such projects. Therefore, I strongly encourage the Australian Government to continue to participate in the RCA.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Cramb

Former Director

Physical Sciences Department

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre