Dr Fiona Hegi-Johnson

Sydney Adventist Hospital

Fox Valley Road Wahroonga

5th March 2017

Dear Sir Madam,

Subject: Proposed acceptance of the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and a Technology (RCA)

As the National Project Coordinator for RAS 6065 "Strengthening the Application of Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy to Improve Cancer Treatment" and RAS/6/085 - "Enhancing Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy for Frequent Cancers in the RCA Region (RCA)"it is a pleasure to write in support of continuation of the IAEA Regional Cooperative Agreement. I currently work as a radiation oncologist at the Sydney Adventist Hospital, and previous to this was in clinical practice at Gosford District Hospital. I also hold an academic appointment in Medical Physics at the University of Newcastle.

In the time that I have been involved in the RCA stereotactic body radiotherapy, a highly technically advanced treatment, has grown rapidly in Australia, from being a technique seen only in a limited number of centres in large metropolitan cities, it is increasingly being implemented and made accessible to a large number of patients, including those in regional areas.

The RCA has been very important in the initial development of expertise in regional centres in Australia with physicists and radiation oncologists from Townsville, North Coast Cancer Care Centre and Gosford attending training courses overseas. This gave them first-hand experience of the clinical implementation of this technology in Japan, Korea and Singapore.

Australia is also a designated regional training hub for RAS 6065 and is committed to providing training and support for the safe and effective implementation of SBRT in the Asia Pacific region. As a part of this commitment, Australia provides a network for research, training and collaboration between the regional training hubs and other international centres. Participation in the RCA has been particularly useful in fostering international collaborations in research and clinical trials, with a number of Japanese oncologists attending the Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group meetings and visiting Australian centres, strengthening research collaboration between our countries.

The RCA has also highlighted Australia's strengths in training of clinicians and allied health professionals. In 2014 a regional training course in oligometastatic and genitourinary disease was held jointly by the University of Sydney and Sydney West Radiation Oncology Network. This hosted attendees from 16 countries, and was the first regional training course to provide training for radiation therapists. The last day of the training course was a symposium, with more than 100 international and local attendees. Both the regional training course and

symposium benefited from an outstanding faculty, including Professor Morten Høyer (Aarhuus University Hospital, Denmark) and Associate Professor Arjun Sahgal (Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto Canada) and was highly rated by participants.

In 2016 I was also invited to attend the Thai Association of Radiation Oncologists Annual Scientific Meeting to present the innovative research that Australian radiation oncology departments and scientists are performing in stereotactic body radiotherapy, and have also been invited to present a similar overview at a Regional Training Course at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, India in 2017. Other Australian experts, such as Mr Jeffrey Barber (Crown Princess Mary Cancer Network, Sydney) have also contributed their expertise to regional training courses in Singapore.

Given the importance of the RCA in fostering clinical advances in the implementation of new radiotherapy technologies, and the opportunities it has given Australian health professionals to develop relationships within the Asian region, we look forward to ongoing participation as we move towards the next phase of the project in RAS/6/085 - “Enhancing Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy for Frequent Cancers in the RCA Region (RCA)”, which commenced in 2016.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Fiona Hegi-Johnson