



Lost in the Labyrinth: overseas trained doctors report tabled in Parliament

Chair of the House of Representatives Health and Ageing Committee, Steve Georganas today tabled the report for the inquiry into registration and support processes for international medical graduates (IMGs).

The report contains 45 recommendations to improve transparency, efficiency and accountability in the registration system for IMGs and is the result of a 14 month inquiry in which the committee heard evidence from 146 witnesses across every state and territory in Australia.

Steve Georganas said that the committee's main focus was to cut unnecessary red tape in the registration process for IMGs while ensuring that Australia's high clinical standards are maintained.

"The lack of a clear pathway to registration, opaque decision making, and a high degree of duplication are some of the key challenges facing IMGs trying to register in Australia" he said.

"One example was an overseas trained specialist who told us he was forced to sit a basic exam again only to find he was the author of the prescribed textbook".

"Clearly some parts of the current registration system don't actually contribute to better outcomes for IMGs or the communities they serve. We need good doctors to be able to get on with the job they came here to do – not stuck doing paperwork for months on end."

"It's especially important in rural and remote areas where IMGs make up 40% of the medical workforce. Those communities can't afford to lose good doctors to bureaucracy so it is critical, and urgent, that the registration pathways are clear and efficient."

Key recommendations include:

- establishment a 'one stop shop' to assist IMGs to in navigating accreditation and registration processes.
- a review of the 10 year moratorium requiring IMGs to work in a District of Workforce Shortage for up to 10 years to be eligible for a Medicare Provider Number;
- an increase in the validity period for English language test results from two years to four years when applying for certain forms of medical registration;
- establishment of a central document repository for IMG paperwork to reduce duplication and administrative inefficiency

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