

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000962

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: GP Shortages

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Does the Department have strategies in place to encourage more doctors/doctors in training to consider general practice?

Answer:

The Department has several initiatives to encourage more doctors to consider general practice as a career.

As part of the Integrated Rural Training Pipeline (IRTP) for Medicine measure, the Government has allocated up to \$26.674 million (GST exclusive) for the Rural Junior Doctor Training Innovation Fund. The Fund will support rurally-based interns to have rural primary care based rotations (mostly in general practice).

The Australian Government fully funds two general practice training programs as part of a workforce strategy aimed at increasing the number and distribution of general practitioners in Australia.

The Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program is an Australian Government initiative which provides training for registrars towards fellowship and gaining specialist (general practitioner) registration. The Commonwealth has continued to increase the number of training places on the AGPT Program. The 2014-2015 Budget measure, Rebuilding general practice education and training to deliver more GPs, included expanding the AGPT program from 1,200 to 1,500 commencing training places each year, from 2015.

The Department also funds the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS), which is a three or four year national program that delivers structured distance education and supervision to doctors while they continue to provide general medical services in rural and remote locations throughout Australia. The number of places available each year was increased from 22 to 32 in 2014.

The Department works with the two general practice colleges, the Royal Australian College of General Practice and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine to market general practice as a career.