



Office of the Minister for Health

12 APR 2011

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Mr James Churchill
Chair, Medical Student Council of Victoria
Level 2, Medical Building
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MELBOURNE VIC 3010

Dear Mr Churchill

Thank you for your letter of 22 February 2011 to the Hon David Davis MP, regarding undergraduate training in Victoria. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf and advised that he appreciates you taking the time to outline your concerns. Supporting the provision of high quality medical intern and medical graduate placements remains a priority for Victoria.

The Victorian government is committed to providing intern positions for Commonwealth supported medical students and currently guarantees all Victorian permanent resident graduates of Victorian medical schools an intern position upon graduation. The 2008 State Budget included funding of \$35.13 million over four years to enable internships and postgraduate year two positions for up to 690 domestic graduates of Victorian medical schools by 2012. The growth in training positions has been staged over four years to build system capacity and ensure that service viability and the quality of clinical education are maintained.

By 2012 the 690 intern positions in Victoria will be sufficient to meet the needs of both domestic graduates from Commonwealth supported places and those domestic full fee paying students who commenced their medical studies in 2008 or earlier.

As you are aware, there is no guarantee of intern positions for international full fee paying students from 2012. A number of key issues remain unresolved and these need to be addressed before any commitment can be made to fund additional intern places for international students. The Victorian health system will be under pressure to provide sufficient supervision and training in respect of the 690 intern places already approved. Any further expansion would need careful planning, as it could compromise patient safety through stretching supervision capacity too thinly. The quality of junior doctor clinical education could also suffer through reduced access to patients and fewer bedside teaching and mentoring opportunities.

Given these concerns, it is not possible for the Minister to accede to your request to immediately increase the number of state-funded internship positions in Victorian health services. However, the Minister has asked me to inform you that he will continue to consider this issue. Thank you for raising this matter with the Minister.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brett Barton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brett Barton
Senior Advisor