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## Increase in GP Registrar Training Places

The General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA Ltd) welcomes the increase in the number of training places for Australian general practice training program. The Australian Government yesterday announced an increase of 75 additional training places in 2009 and 100 training places for 2010. This will take the total number of available training places to 675 for 2009 training year and then to 700 for the 2010 training year. The government also announced that the Remote Vocational Training Scheme will be extended to 22 places in 2011.

GPRA Chair, Dr Belinda Guest is pleased to see the Government respond positively to clear recommendations coming from General Practice Stakeholders. "Four weeks ago United General Practice Australia met for the first time to consider issues affecting General Practice and there was a clear recommendation that training places needed to increase at least 100 places a year for the next 6 years."

"While warmly welcomed, the Government's increase in training places falls short of the recommendation from this group of peak General Practice Bodies and I would encourage further consultation to ensure that we get the numbers right in the long run!"

GPRA have sought to promote General Practice as the Medical Specialty of choice, with initiatives such as the General Practice Student Network and it is essential that efforts such as these are supported and expanded to ensure that we can fill the increased places in the future. As GPRA Vice Chair, Dr Tim Francis explains, "General Practitioners provide great value to the Australian healthcare system, and while we continue to undervalue them with comparatively low medicare rebates, it is possible that even this minor increase in places may be adequate to meet demand."

"Having General Practitioners central to the delivery of primary care in any context is fundamental for the success of our healthcare system. Nurturing, supporting and expanding this workforce is paramount. Today is an important first step but the battle against a declining general practitioner workforce has just begun. We hope that this will set the scene for a new era of government and industry interaction where we work together to better support the future education, training and workforce needs for General Practice." Added Amit Vohra GPRA CEO.

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