



Media Release 20 February 2009

**RESPONSE TO NATIONAL HEALTH AND HOSPITALS REFORM COMMISSION
REPORT**

GPRA welcomes the emphasis on General Practice remaining central to the delivery of primary care as outlined in the NHHRC interim report.

There is now greater pressure on the care relationship between families and their general practitioner, therefore it is essential to support and nurture a robust future GP workforce.

Voluntary registration may be seen as a way to enhance complex care, however this is uncharted territory and patient security and anonymity may be at risk of being compromised.

If patients can't get to a GP then they present to hospitals – this is not sustainable financially and certainly not the best use of our health priorities. We need to refocus on building a sustainable accessible workforce

More seamless access between hospitals and GPs needs to occur for better management of chronic care. The continuity of care is often disrupted under current ad-hoc systems and a national patient centric ehealth record would be of significant benefit. Challenges around security have long been identified and acknowledges, however, it's time to move towards a solution.

This report has clearly outlined some of the challenges around healthcare and the central role that General Practice must play in this area. Whilst the report highlights areas of improvement and better management of patient care the elephant in the room remains: where are these GPs going to come from?

There needs to be better recognition of GPs and the pay scales need a major overhaul. There needs to be increased pay for GP registrars who are now remunerated at levels below hospital JMOs in many cases. There needs to be an increase in the number of training positions to meet the workforce demand as projected by numerous bodies of 1500 by 2015,

Lastly there needs to be support for programs that attract, nurture and train this workforce such as GPSN, GPSN Schwartz First Wave Scholarships, GP Compass and PGPPP.

For more information or comment:

Dr Belinda Guest, Chair – 0406 214 076

Mr. Amit Vohra, Chief Executive Officer – 0431 909 502