

NAMDS National Association for Medical Deputising Services (Australia)

Monday, April 23, 2012

The Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

There has been substantial coverage recently in the medical press about whether the government should persist with the 10 year moratorium on International Medical Graduates (IMGs).

Various bodies including the AMA and RACGP seem to be arguing that the moratorium be abolished or others, such as the House of Representative Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, are recommending that the period of the Moratorium be reduced.

The National Association for Medical Deputising Services (NAMDS) is very concerned that in considering this issue the government adopt a balanced perspective.

Whilst the moratorium has been an onerous impost on some international medical graduates, it is clear that the rural and remote medical workforce has been enhanced by the regulation, as well as regional public hospitals.

NAMDS alerts you to an often overlooked benefit of the moratorium, this being the very significant workforce benefit which allows IMGs under the moratorium to work after-hours in accredited medical deputising services in metropolitan Australia.

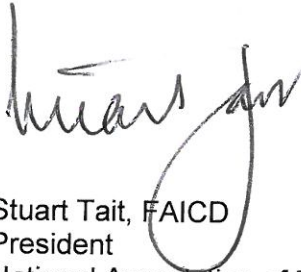
For your information, NAMDS members care for 85% of all Australians annually in all Australian capital cities, primarily for the residents of aged care facilities, the very young, the frail aged and house-bound and those from a lower socio-economic background. Around 95% of all patients attended by NAMDS members after-hours are bulk-billed, hence equity of access is very strong.

Without the 10 year moratorium, NAMDS members would struggle to provide an adequate after-hours medical workforce and these patients would be forced to attend already stretched public hospital emergency departments.

Can we please encourage you and your Department to be very careful about changing this long standing and successful workforce regulation, without first appreciating the magnitude of some of the unintended consequences.

NAMDS looks forward to working with you and the Department on this key aspect of after-hours care. Should you require clarification or have further questions regarding this letter, please contact me via phone on 07 3239 7947 or by email: stuartt@familycare.com.au

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Tait', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Stuart Tait, FAICD
President
National Association of Medical Deputising (Australia)