

Media Release

6 July 2022

GP trainees' pay and conditions to be reviewed this year

The minimum pay and employment conditions that cover general practice registrars during training placements will be reviewed in 2022.

General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRRA) and General Practice Supervisors Australia (GPSA), the two national peak bodies that represent GP registrars and the general practitioners who supervise them during their training placements, will lead the review of the AGPT Program *National Terms and Conditions for the Employment of Registrars* (NTCER).

GPRRA and GPSA have been responsible for negotiating the NTCER for GP registrars and practices since 2000. The NTCER, which is not a registered award, was last reviewed in 2018.

GPRRA president Dr Antony Bolton said both organisations want a well-supported and respected GP training sector.

Dr Bolton said the GP training sector has experienced extensive change in the last few years.

"GPRRA looks forward to working with GPSA, as it gives us all a chance to address the major systemic employment barriers that are driving junior doctors away from applying to general practice.

"In recent years there has been a decline in the number of Junior Medical Officers applying to GP training, and patients are finding it increasingly harder to access a GP when they need one, particularly in rural settings.

"The pandemic and rising financial costs have placed intense pressure on practices and the training sector. The nation needs to find solutions to increase the number of junior doctors applying and completing GP training."

GPSA Chair, Dr Nicole Higgins, said the review was an opportunity to focus on solutions.

"General practitioners and rural generalists who take on the responsibility and workload of mentoring trainees are an essential part of Australia's primary health care sector.

"These individuals choose to supervise because they are passionate about general practice and shaping the careers of junior doctors.

"The passion of our GP supervisors needs to be nourished so it can be transferred to the next generation along with the wealth of knowledge they share with their registrars."

GPRA and GPSA have agreed on the following starting points to guide the collaborative review:

- Both GP trainees and GP supervisors are entitled to a quality training experience.
- Appropriate support and funding for GP supervisors and GP training practices is crucial for the sustainability of the nation's primary health system.
- Models of employment for GP registrars need to be fair and equitable, delivering working conditions and remuneration that compare with other specialist trainees while taking into account the private business context of training practices.

"As national peak organisations, GPRA and GPSA both play a critical role in monitoring and providing advice on the NTCER and other employment matters for GPs in practice and training," Dr Bolton said.

"Between us, we represent in the vicinity of 30,000 doctors across the GP Training space - our members are best placed to advise on what needs to be addressed to tackle Australia's GP workforce shortage," he said.

Dr Higgins agreed, "Through this collaborative approach, we can infuse optimism into this sector and lead the charge for change.

"Given the mounting pressure on GP practices as they continue to deliver high quality, safe training environments, it is timely that both our organizations undertake this review of the NTCER and employment conditions for GPs in training."

This review will include consultation across the members of GPRA and GPSA and the GP Training and Education Sector, and is scheduled to commence from July 2022.

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