

MEDIA RELEASE

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Doctors call for more medical student support to build a strong, diverse workforce

AMA Queensland has called on the federal government to give medical students access to Commonwealth prac payments alongside other health workers.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has announced the expansion of the program to ten new allied health categories, including clinical psychology, physiotherapy and pharmacy.

This will give students access to means-tested payments of up to \$338.60 a week while they are doing their clinical and professional placements.

AMA Queensland has backed the Australian Medical Students' Association's call for that allowance to be expanded.

"Australia needs thousands of new doctors from all walks of life to keep up with the demands of a growing and ageing population," President Associate Professor Erica Gannon said.

"Medical students are required to complete between 2000 and 4000 hours of unpaid practical training, and we shouldn't be forcing them to go into debt or to do their study and prac work exhausted because they have to fit in a part-time job to make ends meet."

Assoc Prof Gannon said prac payments were especially needed to support medical students from First Nations, rural and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

"We need doctors from diverse backgrounds to serve their communities and bring unique perspectives to the profession," she said.

"In a time of medical workforce shortage, the government should be investing in bright young minds to become the medical leaders of tomorrow."

AMA Queensland's own charity arm, AMA Queensland Foundation, raises funds annually to support medical students facing hardship.

"In 2026 we have awarded nine scholarships of \$10,000 each - but we had more than 100 deserving applications," Assoc Prof Gannon said.

"This shows how great the demand is, and how transformative the support can be.

"Commonwealth prac payments, like our scholarships, could mean the difference between a student staying in medicine or giving up their studies altogether."