

Australian Rural & Remote Workforce Agencies Group Limited

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The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Secretary

BY: MIC

ARRWAG Response to the Inquiry into Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing

Thank you for providing the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group (ARRWAG) with the opportunity to respond to the Joint Committee on Migration's Inquiry into Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing.

ARRWAG is a national non-government organisation, funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to improve access for Australians to appropriate and high quality care (especially medical practitioners) in rural and remote Australia. ARRWAG represents the Rural Workforce Agencies (RWA) in each State and the Northern Territory (NT) who were established to recruit and retain doctors for rural and remote communities, through the Australian Government's Rural and Remote General Practitioner Program (RRGPP). Each RWA works closely with their respective State and Territory Governments to support recruitment, retention and professional development of rural doctors. ARRWAG has prepared this response in consultation with the RWA's as their representative peak national body.

Whilst there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in relation to the inconsistent state and territory assessment criteria for temporary resident Overseas Trained Doctors (OTD), ARRWAG is of the view that current immigration requirements for OTD's seeking permanent residency under the Skilled Migration Scheme is appropriate, well informed and recognises the importance of adequately assessing the skills of overseas trained doctors. Under the current criteria, skills assessment of permanent resident OTD's is effectively referred to the relevant medical bodies and the appropriate benchmarks used.

Given the increasing reliance on OTD's, particularly in rural and remote areas, ARRWAG supports:

- The inclusion of General Practitioners under the General Skilled Migration Program
- The priority processing of General Practitioners under the Skilled Migration Program
- The assessment requirements for registration under the Skilled Migration Program.

ARRWAG welcomes further consultation on this inquiry.

Yours sincerely


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