



## AUSTRALIAN OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL INC.

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4 June 2009

Elton Humphery  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr Humphery

**RE: *Health Workforce Australia Bill 2009.***

Regarding the Senate Community Affairs Committee review of the *Health Workforce Australia Bill 2009 (the 'Bill')*, subject to our concerns expressed below, the Australian Osteopathic Council (AOC) supports the proposals in the Bill.

The AOC is the peak body formed for the purposes of ensuring that the standards of education, training and assessment of the osteopathic profession promote and protect the health of the Australian community.

It is an independent national standards body for osteopathic education and training and has the following five core functions:

- to assess osteopathic programs, and accredit programs which meet the AOC accreditation standards, leading to eligibility for registration as an osteopath in Australia
- to advise and make recommendations to the osteopathic registering authorities (or successor body/ies) and other relevant interest groups on matters concerning the registration of osteopaths
- to assess the suitability of overseas trained osteopaths to practise in Australia
- to provide information and advice to government concerning the adequacy of a person's skills in the field of Osteopathy for the purposes of migration to Australia
- to provide information and advice to government relating to law and policy concerning the registration of osteopaths in Australia.

We seek an explicit assurance that osteopaths are to be included in the legislative instrument to be made under sub-s. 5 (3) of the Bill, noting that previously Osteopaths have not been listed in draft documents or consultation papers. The National Health Workforce Taskforce itself omitted Osteopaths from its coverage of professions concerned with Clinical Placements reform. This is despite Osteopathy being one of the ten professions included under the National Registration Scheme for Health Professionals, as well as being eligible for Medicare and Department of Veterans Affairs rebates.

Currently there is severe financial pressure on Osteopathic faculties / schools and programs in Australian universities, arising from the high cost of clinical (“hands-on”) training. Such training is not subsidised, as in many other health and allied health professions, through access to public health facilities. Osteopathy courses have very high demand from students for places and there is a strong public demand for Osteopaths in the community. We therefore call on the Committee to ensure that Osteopaths have the same rights of access to public health training facilities as other allied health professionals.

We call on the Committee to ensure that Osteopaths are included, with other relevant health professionals, in all sections of the Bill to allow the ongoing educational and professional development and progression of Osteopaths within the health system.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Martin', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

**Peter Martin**  
**Executive Officer**