
MEDIA RELEASE

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Not good enough: next ACT government must attract GPs

With the lowest number of GPs per person of any capital in Australia, the next ACT Government must attract GPs to improve access to essential care for Canberrans, says Australia's peak GP body.

Ahead of the ACT election on 19 October, the Royal Australian College of GPs has urged all parties to follow other jurisdictions, including Victoria and Queensland, in providing an incentive for doctors to train as GPs in Canberra.

NSW&ACT Chair Dr Rebekah Hoffman said: "There is no substitute for the quality care you get from a GP who knows you and your history. But years of poor decisions by the Barr Government has made it harder for Canberrans to see a GP when they need to.

"There are fewer GPs per person in Canberra than in Darwin, Hobart, and Sydney. Last year, there was [just 90.7 GPs](#) per 100,000 people in the ACT, the lowest of any major metropolitan area. Similar areas in NSW had 118.6, and Victoria and Queensland had 118.2 and 118.1.

"For Australia's national capital to have such poor access to essential healthcare is simply not good enough. Canberrans deserve better.

"The need for general practice care in the ACT has never been greater.

"The ACT's population is ageing, and GPs are seeing more people with chronic illness – more [than half of people](#) in Canberra have at least one chronic condition. This requires high-quality general practice care. GPs help people live longer, healthier lives, and manage chronic conditions for those who have them, so they can live their best life.

"We know when people can't see a GP, they get sicker and need more expensive hospital care, putting more pressure on Canberra's struggling health system.

"So, Canberra clearly needs more GPs. And there is a simple and effective way to get more GPs training here – funding for incentives works.

"Victoria implemented [a \\$40,000 GP training incentive](#) and it immediately boosted the number of doctors training to be GPs there, and Queensland committed to [a similar \\$40,000 incentive](#) this year.

"Being a GP is one of the most rewarding jobs, but there are barriers.

"When a doctor starts GP training, they lose entitlements earned working in hospital and many [face a pay cut](#). This makes it harder to attract doctors to train as GPs, and it's far worse in an expensive city like Canberra.

"An incentive payment removes the main barriers to GP training and has immediate benefits for the community.

"More young doctors are choosing to train as GPs in 2025, and GPs tend to practice where they train. The fastest and best way for the ACT to get the GPs it needs for the future is for them to train here. A \$40,000 incentive is an investment in the ACT's health.

"We're calling on all parties in the ACT to commit to incentives to make up for its drastic shortage of GPs and secure the GP workforce Canberrans need today, and in the future."

~ENDS

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the peak representative organisation for general practice, the backbone of Australia's health system. We set the standards for general practice, facilitate lifelong learning for GPs, connect the general practice community, and advocate for better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

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