

Appendix 9.1 RAPTS summary

RAPTS

Recruitment, Assessment, Placement, Training, Support For International Medical Graduates

Executive Summary and Recommendations from the detailed project proposal Prepared by Dr Susan O'Dwyer and

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Queensland Health, 12 August 2005

Executive Summary

Queensland Health will require the services of highly skilled International Medical Graduates (IMG) to provide health services to Queensland communities for the foreseeable future. The National Health Workforce Strategic Framework¹¹⁶ identifies ethical overseas recruitment as a short term strategy to reduce immediate health workforce shortages in Australia. A comprehensive workforce plan for medical staff in Queensland will need to consider the large and ongoing requirement to fill positions with IMG.

RAPTS aims to deliver a standardised process for the recruitment; assessment; placement; training and support of IMG based on minimum standards of knowledge; skills; abilities; communication and cultural safety, that can be delivered centrally or in satellite sites.

Each element of RAPTS requires adequate resource allocation. It is the opinion of the authors that partial funding of select elements of the proposal in isolation will not deliver on the goal to provide quality and safe medical services to the communities of Queensland.

Attraction of the highest quality medical graduates requires a coordinated marketing and recruitment strategy that endeavours to proactively support health care facilities to provide services. For the recruitment of IMG, commitment to the development of a standardised assessment and increased resources for processing of immigration, medical board and Specialist College requirements will be of particular benefit to the smallest health care facilities struggling to interpret and keep pace with the ever changing environment of medical staff employment.

Appropriate use of existing resources such as job descriptions and service capability knowledge will enable placement of IMG in environments that are commensurate with their level of clinical decision making and supervision requirements.

¹¹⁶ Australian Health Ministers' Conference (2004), National Health Workforce Strategic Framework, Sydney

Training in the areas mandated by the Medical Board of Queensland as well as the proposed mandatory Queensland Health orientation and training should be delivered prior to the commencement of employment. The Centre for International Medical Graduates should continue its role in the preparation of IMG for the Australian Medical Council (AMC) multiple choice question and clinical exams with enhancements around flexibility in mode of delivery.

Ongoing support for OTDs, personal and professional, to achieve the Australian standard as identified by AMC certification and/or Fellowship of an Australian College should be assisted by terms and conditions of employment that support ongoing training and professional development. The Association of International Medical Graduates of Australia and New Zealand will be developing a mentoring scheme to OTDs through a Commonwealth grant. Support provided should encompass the social and family needs of the OTD.

There is considerable work to be done to achieve all that is proposed. The commitment of the staff Queensland Health to achieving that end has always and will continue to be, present.

Key Statements

Queensland Health recognises the valuable and necessary contribution that IMG make to the provision of health services to the communities of Queensland, now and in to the future.

The RAPTS process will enable Queensland Health to provide quality, safe and accessible health services through the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled international medical workforce.

RAPTS will be the process for recruitment of all IMG regardless of residency or registration status, to Queensland Health.

RAPTS will be a standard process that can be administered centrally or in satellite sites.

RAPTS will provide a single entry point for recruitment of IMG regardless of method of introduction.

The final decision to offer employment to a suitable applicant to a nominated vacancy will remain with the employing Health Service District or Unit

RAPTS processes will be accountable to the Queensland community, Queensland Government, international medical workforce and service providers through service agreements, regular reporting and qualitative and quantitative program evaluation.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the following key objectives be adopted by Queensland Health:

- Implementation of a well resourced best practice process for the recruitment, assessment, placement, training and support of all international medical graduates in Queensland based on minimum standards of clinical knowledge, skills and ability, communication, cultural safety and preparedness for practice in the Queensland Health System.
- Queensland is identified as a destination of choice for medical graduates.
- Improvement in community confidence in the provision of quality, safe and accessible health care by the public health service in Queensland.

These will be achieved through the following projects and recommended actions:

2.1 Projects

The RAPTS project is funded **immediately** to develop, implement and evaluate a best practice process of recruitment, assessment, placement, training and support for international medical graduates in Queensland for staggered implementation from January 2006.

It is recommended that the development of the RAPTS project be managed through six (6) subprojects under the following headings. The project statements for these sub projects are summarised below:

2.1.1 RAPTS – Marketing

To develop an annual coordinated marketing and advertising strategy to attract medical graduates including IMG to employment opportunities in Queensland.

2.1.2 RAPTS – Recruitment

To develop, implement and evaluate a standard entry and recruitment process for IMG seeking employment opportunities in Queensland Health.

2.1.3 RAPTS – Assessment

To develop a standardised process and supporting resources for the screening and assessment of international medical graduates seeking employment opportunities in Queensland Health based on minimum standards of knowledge, skills, ability, communication and cultural safety.

2.1.4 RAPTS – Placement

To develop a standardised process and resources to ensure that IMG are recruited to positions that are commensurate with their knowledge, skills and abilities scope of practice and support the supervision conditions of their registration and which also considers the social and personal needs of the IMG and family.

2.1.5 RAPTS – Training

To investigate options for providing pre employment training and orientation required for IMG to deliver safe and quality medical services to the Queensland community.

2.1.6 RAPTS – Support

To develop and implement effective support mechanisms for international medical graduates (IMG) wishing to reside long term in Australia and achieve career goals that will benefit the health services in Queensland.

2.2 Recommendations for Immediate Action

1. Public Affairs in consultation with stakeholders consider opportunities for the timely and sensitive acknowledgement of the valuable and necessary contribution that International Medical Graduates make to the provision of health services in Queensland.
2. Review and update of the content available on the Queensland Health Internet site to promote the attractions and opportunities for employment in Queensland
3. Department of Immigration, Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs is engaged in discussion at a senior management level of Queensland Health to consider options for streamlining the immigration process for the international health workforce through central sponsorship.
4. Queensland Health requests that the Australian Medical Council and relevant Specialist colleges clarify their current position in relation to recognition of international medical qualifications.
5. Queensland Health implements a policy of only accepting applications from graduates of medical schools currently listed by the World Directory of Medical Schools or the International Medical Education Directory.
6. Queensland Health investigates options for partnering with Department of Health & Ageing and/or another state to formalise existing bridging courses available to IMG into a postgraduate qualification in Australian Health practice accredited by the relevant authority.
7. Clarification is sought from the Director General for detail of the recent funding announcements under the Forster-Morris Fund relating to:
 - training and career pathways for rural doctors
 - database to enable sharing of information about doctors credentials
 - flexibility granted to Queensland Health in its recruitment techniques
8. Liaise with Corporate HR/IR Policy and Strategy Centre in relation to award conditions to:
 - Facilitate flexible working arrangements to encourage Australian graduates to retain and return to work
 - Support equitable access to professional development opportunities for IMG on temporary contracts (>12 months)

9. Investigate the number of Queensland residents currently studying medicine at interstate universities and explore future strategies to encourage a return to Queensland for Intern training.
10. Immediate consideration needs to be given to those IMG with special purpose registration presently employed in Queensland Health and assistance provided to help them achieve AMC certification or Fellowship of an Australian College
11. Queensland health reviews the framework and resources for the assessment and remediation of medical graduates whose performance and competence has been questioned.

Key Performance Indicators

- Proportion of IMG seeking employment with Queensland Health who are case managed through a consistent state-wide process that requires minimum competency standards in key areas regardless of point of contact. (95% by June 2006)
- Satisfaction rating from IMG who are managed through the RAPTS process based on qualitative survey feedback (Above average rating from 75% at June 2007)
- Satisfaction rating from service providers who utilise the RAPTS process for recruitment based on qualitative survey feedback (Above average rating from 75% at June 2007)
- Proportion of IMG placed via RAPTS who are deemed not suitable for employment (<10% by December 2007)