

20 December 2023

## Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health

### Supplementary questions: Australian Medical Association (NSW) (AMA (NSW))

1. *Your submission calls for additional funding for LHDs to implement changes for GP/VMO payment arrangements. Why is additional funding necessary?*

Visting Medical Officers (VMOs) have a key role to play in the provision of medical services within the New South Wales public hospital system, community health and private medical practice and hospitals. AMA (NSW) is the registered industrial body for VMOs in the public hospital system, and as such, has long-standing and well-established insight into the services VMOs provide in New South Wales.

AMA (NSW) has participated in a working group with the Rural Doctors Association (RDA) to review and improve GP VMO arrangements.

We are aware of doctors who have chosen to work exclusively in their private practices because the stresses and difficulties of working within the public hospital system are not balanced by the compensation available.

Remuneration available to GP VMOs in other states is often more generous than is available in NSW.

GP VMOs are also frustrated that locums have more attractive terms and conditions available to them.

Being a regional or rural general practitioner working in a public hospital requires additional training beyond usual general practice. This should be rewarded with appropriate terms and conditions which must be supported by increases to the funding available to GP VMOs.

For these reasons, the review of the GP VMO arrangements should not be undertaken within the existing funding arrangements. We have seen many other public sector workers have their conditions reviewed outside existing funding arrangements and this option should be available to GP VMOs.

2. *Have programs like the NSW Rural Generalist Training Program helped to address shortages in the GP workforce?*

AMA (NSW) is unaware of any data collecting service that monitors the NSW Rural Generalist Training Program. Therefore, we would redirect the Committee to approach NSW Health regarding this matter. The collection of data and information relating to training programs is a necessary step to ensure that the program is being implemented as planned, and to allow continual monitoring and evaluation of its success or failures. A lack of accessible and accurate state-wide health workforce data limits visibility and planning capability, preventing the monitoring of performance.