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The Race to Qualify: Long on politics but short on substance

The report tabled in the NSW Parliament – *The Race to Qualify - Review of practices for the employment of medical practitioners in the NSW health system* - raised interesting points but failed to provide a balanced assessment of the key issues, said the President of the AMC, Dr Kerry Breen.

"Unfortunately, the authors have generated a political rather than authoritative report and as a result, the credibility of most findings is open to question," Dr Breen said.

He said the community's right to competent and safe medical care – regardless of where a doctor has been born or trained - had been neglected in favour arguments advocating the rights of individual doctors to practice in this country.

Dr Breen said this bias was evident in several of the report's findings.

"For example, the report found that the AMC's practice of focusing exams to screen for the problems currently being experienced in Australia's public health system was unfair.

"This finding is just absurd. The AMC has an obligation to the Australian community to ensure that successful candidates are able to meet the health care needs of people living in Australia; it must screen out candidates who would perpetuate or exacerbate existing problems through their lack of knowledge, skills, training or experience," Dr Breen said.

The report did touch on some major issues, including the problems facing individual doctors and some systemic issues, Dr Breen said.

However, several of the recommendations made in the report revealed the investigating committee's failure to understand the fundamentals of medical training and practice in Australia or the AMC assessment process, he said.

"It is disappointing that much of the information provided by the AMC to the review committee about the charter and operations of the AMC were either misunderstood or not considered. This lack of knowledge is reflected in the substance of the report," he said.

"The AMC's charter is very specific in relation to overseas trained doctors: it must set standards and ensure overseas trained doctors who pass its examination process are able to provide safe medical care to the Australian community," Dr Breen said.

He said the AMC would continue to work cooperatively with all agencies involved in this debate and valued the contribution of the many thousands of overseas trained doctors who were now working diligently and effectively for the Australian community.

Ends.

Further information: Nicole Newton: 0407 998 611/ 03-9499 8711