



**MEDIA RELEASE
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Accreditation of education and training programs of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has won endorsement of its training programs, following a review by the Australian Medical Council (AMC). The AMC is an independent national standards body for medical education and training. With the support of the specialist medical colleges, in 2002 the AMC introduced a new process for reviewing and accrediting specialist medical training programs. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is the fifth college to undertake the accreditation process.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists provides specialist training and continuing professional development programs in Australia and New Zealand. There are presently about 520 doctors registered for training in obstetrics and gynaecology and their sub-specialties. The training programs are six years in length.

To review the College's training programs, the AMC set up an expert team which reviewed: documents provided by the College; submissions on the College's training programs from health departments, consumer organisations, medical schools and other colleges; surveyed doctors completing obstetric and gynaecology training, their supervisors, and overseas-trained specialists whose qualifications and experience are being assessed by the College; and interviewed College committees, doctors who are completing College training programs and their supervisors. The team also visited large and small hospitals in urban and rural sites across Australia and New Zealand.

Chair of the AMC Team, Professor Derek Frewin AO, who is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide, commented: 'There are some difficult challenges facing the College, such as medical indemnity and trainees' concerns about work/life balance, which impact on the College's ability to recruit to the specialty. The College is working to address these concerns. It has well structured training programs and a strong commitment to educational innovation. The College leads the way in requiring its Fellows to provide evidence of involvement in continuing education and professional development throughout their career.'

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The College is introducing a new curriculum in 2004, to take account of changes in the healthcare system and in the professional nature of women's healthcare — through advances in technology, an increased emphasis on medical management rather than surgical options, and the demand for healthcare that involves an informed partnership between specialist and patient.

As well as identifying the strengths of the College's training programs, the Team's detailed accreditation report identifies areas where further work is required. At the time of the review, some of developments to be implemented in 2004 had not been finalised. The College will report annually to the AMC on these issues and on other concerns identified by the Team which include: trainees' reduced experience in procedural gynaecology; the requirements for accreditation of training posts and institutions; processes for selection of trainees; assessment of overseas-trained specialists; and mechanisms for communication with stakeholder groups concerning training matters.

In response to the report the College's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Eleanor Long, said "The College has a strong record of educational innovation and achievement and it is pleasing that this has been highlighted by the AMC. The College works to provide the highest quality specialist care for women, and its new curriculum and progressive professional development programs are central to this endeavour. The College wishes to acknowledge the professionalism and diligence of the AMC team and values the recommendations offered in the report.'

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