

AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL COUNCIL INCORPORATED

NEWS RELEASE

AMC EXAMINATION PROCEDURE DOES NOT BREACH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) stated today that its examination procedures for overseas trained doctors did not constitute a breach of the Racial Discrimination Act.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is currently conducting an inquiry into the examination of overseas trained doctors.

"Medical practice in Australia is regulated by separate laws in each state and territory", the President of the AMC, Professor Correy explained. Before a doctor can legally engage in medical practise, he or she must be registered with the relevant Medical Board in the state in which the practice takes place.

The AMC is a national standards body which conducts screening examinations on behalf of the State and Territory Medical Boards of doctors whose basic medical qualifications are not recognised under the current legislation in Australia. The AMC examination is based on the final qualifying examinations of Australian Medical Schools.

"This is the performance standard required for entry to medical practice in Australia", Propessor Correy indicated.

The AMC examination consists of two stages:

- * a test of medical knowledge as applied to medical conditions in the Australian community;
- * a clinical examination involving patients in a teaching hospital setting.

The Predient of the AMC explained that the questions used in the AMC examination are drawn directly from material prepared by Australian Medical Schools. The patients used in the clinical examination represent conditions likely to be encountered within the general Australian community.

In 1992 the Australian Health Ministers Conference announced a national strategy for dealing with medical workforce issues. This included provisions to limit the numbers of medical practitioners who could enter the workforce. The Health Ministers agreed to set a quota on the AMC clinical examination based on merit performance at the medical knowledge test. The quota was implemented in October 1992 and in the first two years of operation some 400 overseas trained doctors from 53 different countries have qualified under the quota.

"The AMC examination procedures are applied equally to all doctors whose basic medical qualifications are not legally recognised in Australia, irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin", Professor Correy explained. "The AMC maintains that the selection of doctors under the examination procedures is based on the merit performance of the individual doctor alone. The examination does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin."

CONTACT: Mr. Ian Frank,
Executive Officer
Australian Medical Council

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