



MEDIA RELEASE

AMC BACKS COMMUNITY RIGHTS TO HIGH QUALITY MEDICAL CARE

The first priority of the AMC was to ensure that all overseas trained doctors working in Australia had the clinical skills and knowledge required to provide safe medical care to the Australian community, said AMC Executive Officer, Mr Ian Frank.

“Australians have the right to expect high quality and consistent standards of medical care, no matter which doctor they are treated by or where that doctor was trained,” Mr Frank said.

Through its accreditation of Australian medical schools and its examination of overseas trained doctors, the AMC provided an independent assessment of those standards, he said.

“Since July 1990, more than 1600 overseas trained doctors (or about 220 doctors per year), representing 79 countries of training, have passed the AMC exam and qualified to practice in Australia,” Mr Frank said.

“In effect, these doctors have been assessed against the same standards expected of an Australian medical graduate,” he said.

Mr Frank said the AMC was aware of the decision by a minority of overseas trained doctors to conduct a hunger strike from Monday, November 17, 1997, in an effort to force the AMC to drop the standards required for medical registration in Australia by changing the examination process.

It is understood that many of the doctors involved in the hunger strike have previously attempted and failed the AMC examination a number of times.

“While the AMC is clearly concerned that any person, particularly one with some medical knowledge, would undertake such a personally dangerous course of action, it is not appropriate to comment further at this stage,” Mr Frank said.

He said the AMC remained committed to ensuring that its examination processes were set to match the clinical skills, attitudes and knowledge required of Australian medical graduates.

Mr Frank said the concerns of the overseas trained doctors about issues relating to Medicare provider numbers and the resourcing of bridging courses did not involve the AMC.

“Both these issues are completely beyond the scope of the AMC’s charter,” Mr Frank said.

However, the AMC had invested considerable time and effort in developing methods of making the AMC examination process more transparent, he said. “In fact, early next month the Minister for Health will launch a book prepared by the AMC which contains hundreds of questions from previous exam papers together with commentaries from a number of Australia’s leading medical examiners,” Mr Frank said.

“It will be the first book of its kind available anywhere in the world and typifies the AMC’s commitment to clarifying its expectations of candidates,” he said.

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