

# Planning for growth in Victoria's medical workforce

In 2006 Victoria received an additional 220 HECS funded undergraduate medical school places to address workforce shortages. The following year the Commonwealth government removed the 25 per cent cap on the number of domestic undergraduate full fee paying students that can enter medical studies.

As a result of these changes, the number of medical intern positions required by domestic graduates of Victorian medical schools is predicted to jump from 348 in 2008 to as many as 690 in 2012. Demand for postgraduate year two (PGY2) and specialist training places will also increase in the future.

## Funding for growth

The 2008–09 State Budget includes funding of \$55.15 million over four years to support growth in the health workforce to accommodate the increased numbers of students. This includes additional capital investment in teaching infrastructure (\$20.02 million over two years) as well as further early graduate places to train up to 211 additional doctors per year by 2012 to meet future workforce challenges (\$35.13 million over four years). The growth in training positions will be staged over four years to build system capacity and ensure that service viability and the quality of clinical education are maintained.

The Victorian government in 2006 announced an extra 40 medical interns in 2007, rising to an extra 75 a year by 2010. In the 2008–09 Budget, the government boosted this commitment to an extra 45 interns in

2009 (ie 35 more positions on top of the 10 previously announced), rising to an extra 231 interns a year by 2012. This means that the total number of funded medical intern positions in Victoria will increase from 459 in 2008 to 690 in 2012.

In addition, the Victorian government has recognised the need for continuing training of medical graduates in their second year after graduation by announcing an extra 16 PGY2 funded positions in 2009, rising to an extra 151 positions a year by 2012.

The Department of Human Services is undertaking workforce modelling to identify where to direct the growth of funded intern and PGY2 positions in Victoria. In particular, planning for system growth will align with the government's focus on expanding the rural health workforce.





## Additional intern and PGY2 positions

As shown in Table 1, funds are being provided for a total of 45 new medical intern and 16 PGY2 positions in 2009, with a further 45 intern and 45 PGY2 positions in each of 2010 and 2011 and an additional 96 intern positions in 2012.

**Table 1: Targets for intern and PGY2 growth**

Targets		2009	2010	2011	2012	Ongoing
Interns	<i>New</i>	+45	+45	+45	+96	
	Total	504	549	594	690	690
PGY2s	<i>New</i>	+16	+45	+45	+45	
	Total	459	504	549	594	594

Funds for intern and PGY2 positions are made available through the Training and Development (T&D) Grant. The T&D Grant provides payments to health services, based on a proportion of medical graduate salaries, to assist them with the cost of supervision and on-the-job training in the first two years post graduation. The level of grant in 2007–08 is \$28,378 per position for interns and \$31,042 for PGY2s.

The growth of new places is staged over four years in order to build system capacity. This means that there will be a gap between the number of domestic graduates of Victorian medical schools and the number of intern positions until 2012. In the period up until 2012 there will continue to be a reliance on interstate, temporary resident and New Zealand graduates as well as IMGs to fill the additional positions. In 2012 the number of funded intern positions is expected to match the number of graduates from HECS

funded places, plus a number of domestic full fee paying students who have already commenced studies and are expected to graduate in 2012.

## Building education and training capacity

The Victorian government has allocated an extra \$366,000 in 2008–09 (\$5.3 million over four years) to increase the number of medical education officers (MEOs) in Victorian health services. MEOs will support supervisors and clinical educators in the provision of education and training for medical interns and PGY2s. They will also assist health services to expand educational and supervisory capacity in preparation for the increased numbers of new medical graduates in the system from 2012.

These funds complement the \$684,000 per annum already paid to hospitals to support employment of MEOs.

**Table 2: Growth funding for MEOs**

Funding	MEOs
2008–09	\$0.366m
2009–10	\$0.929m
2010–11	\$1.519m
2011–12	\$2.468m
Ongoing	\$2.530m



## Education and training in expanded settings

Placements in general practices and community health services are being considered in order to align medical education and training with service and workforce demands, and to increase system capacity to provide education and training for early graduates. The department is considering the infrastructure needs of health services to ensure that they are adequately equipped to support the increased numbers of medical graduates.

The Victorian government has allocated \$200,000 in 2008–09 (\$1.5 million over four years) to support the extension of clinical training for medical graduates to areas outside of the traditional hospital settings.

**Table 3: Growth funding for expanded settings**

Funding	Expanded settings
2008–09	\$200,000
2009–10	\$308,000
2010–11	\$420,000
2011–12	\$538,000
Ongoing	\$552,000

The funding is an ongoing allocation to assist with the creation of an initial 20 intern and PGY2 positions in other settings, followed by an additional 10 places per annum until 2013. At this time, there is a target of 50 intern and PGY2 positions in other settings. (Note that these positions are part of the overall targets listed in Table 1.)

**Table 4: Targets for expanded settings**

Targets	Interns and PGY2s
2009	20
2010	30
2011	40
2012	50
Ongoing	50

## Support for international medical graduates

International medical graduates (IMGs) will continue to be an integral part of Victoria's health workforce, both now and post-2012. IMGs are needed to meet service delivery imperatives as well as to provide supervision and education for interns and PGY2s in the future.

The Victorian government has allocated \$612,000 in 2008–09 (\$3.8 million over four years) to support the education and training of IMGs in intern and PGY2 positions between 2009 and 2011.

**Table 5: Growth funding for education and training for IMGs**

Funding	IMGs
2008–09	\$0.612m
2009–10	\$1.255m
2010–11	\$1.286m
2011–12	\$0.659m
Ongoing	\$0

The aim is to upskill at least 40 IMGs a year for the next three years, as shown in Table 6.



**Table 6: Targets for education and training for IMGs**

Targets	Interns and PGY2s
2009	40
2010	40
2011	40
Ongoing	0

### Implementation

The Department of Human Services has formed the Postgraduate Medical Reference Group (PMRG) to consider the range of factors associated with the growth in Victorian medical graduates. The terms of reference cover:

<p>Workforce planning issues</p> <p>Challenges/barriers to growth in intern and PGY2 positions</p> <p>Clinical training placements in an expanded range of settings</p> <p>Impact of intern and PGY2 growth on the need for specialist training positions</p> <p>Innovative approaches to education, training and supervision of interns and PGY2s</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of interns and PGY2s</p> <p>Options in respect of a proposed move to a consortia model for medical interns.</p>
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Time limited funding is available in the years 2008–09 to 2011–12 to support implementation of this Budget initiative. This will assist health services and the PMRG to build educational and supervisory capacity in preparation for the growth of interns and PGY2s from 2012.

### Process for allocating new intern positions in 2009

Each year, the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV) coordinates a computer matching process to recruit medical graduates to intern positions. As part of this process, in early 2008 each eligible health service was invited to submit an application for additional intern positions.

In determining the distribution of the 45 new funded positions, the Department of Human Services is giving priority to proposals that will expand system capacity in preparation for the growth in intern numbers in 2012. Particular weighting is given to proposals that will:

- Support growth in rural and outer metropolitan areas
- Expand capacity for core rotations in emergency and surgery
- Increase placements in alternative settings – for example, psychiatry, aged care and general practice
- Address service and workforce needs.

Once offers of new positions have been accepted by health services, the PMCV's Accreditation Subcommittee will proceed with formal accreditation of the new positions.

Further information on the PMCV computer match is available from: [www.computermatching.pmcv.com.au](http://www.computermatching.pmcv.com.au)

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For more information, please contact [workforce@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:workforce@dhs.vic.gov.au) or visit [www.health.vic.gov.au/workforce](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/workforce)