

27 February 2025

Mr Stuart Jacobs
Principal Solicitor
Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

By email to: stuart.jacobs@specialcommission.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Jacobs,

Re: Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding – RANZCP

Thank you for your correspondence dated 25 February 2025 regarding the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding.

We acknowledge that the opportunity to provide new evidence to the Inquiry has concluded, we are grateful for the invitation to provide a closing response. After reviewing the Outline of Submissions by Counsel Assisting, we believe it is important to clarify the RANZCP's role in supporting the development of a high-quality and sustainable mental health care system for NSW.

We are writing to respond to the matters outlined in the Outline of Submissions by Counsel Assisting, and to provide further clarification on several matters that we believe are important to this Inquiry.

The RANZCP is a membership organisation that is responsible for training, education and representing psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand, including over 2,000 psychiatry trainees and Fellows in NSW.

One of our core functions includes overseeing the accreditation of training placements, ensuring they provide safe and effective supervision, and to meet the evolving needs of the psychiatric workforce. We advocate on behalf of both our members and the consumers they serve, regularly engaging with government and key stakeholders regarding workforce issues in mental health.

In line with this, our [NSW 2025-2026 Pre-Budget submission](#), as well as our [update on NSW workforce issues](#) underscores our ongoing commitment to this purpose. We emphasise the importance of maintaining a skilled and adequately supported workforce to ensure the sustainability of high-quality training placements. Without sufficient funding and strategic planning, the risk of workforce shortages and accreditation issues increases, impacting both training quality and mental health service delivery in NSW.

As a specialist medical college, we have a limited ability to influence the number of trainees and the distribution of placements. External factors such as funding, workforce priorities and the specific needs of local areas often determine where trainees are placed, which can impact both the equity accessibility of training opportunities. A critical concern affecting the quality and accessibility of training placements in NSW is the alignment of Local Health

Districts (LHDs), Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) and Psychiatry Training Networks (PTNs). The RANZCP believes that LHDs and SHNs may not be optimally equipped to address the growing mental health needs of the NSW community, particularly in underserved areas. PTNs often fail to align with LHDs, with some training sites situated over 500 km away. A comprehensive review of the role and structure of LHDs and SHNs is essential to ensure they are well-suited to meet the state's mental health needs while expanding and maintaining training placements.

An important component of this review should include the improvement of data collection, coordination, and distribution processes. The [Productivity Commission mental health report \(2020\)](#) highlighted the significant gaps in reliable data for workforce planning across all jurisdictions, both federal and state. In order to address these gaps, we advocate for the implementation of effective data-capturing mechanisms to ensure that training placements align with current and future workforce demands. Currently, specialist medical colleges have limited access to comprehensive data, which makes it difficult to accurately forecast workforce demands and inform policy decisions. RANZCP access to this data could allow for more effective identification of emerging workforce trends and prediction of future training requirements to better align with community needs. Without these improvements, the continued reliance on stop-gap solutions such as locums and emergency departments will only exacerbate workforce shortages.

The RANZCP supports completion of the Gap Analysis using the National Mental Health Service Planning Framework (NMHSPF) to identify service gaps and guide workforce and service planning in NSW. Accurate data aligned with local and state needs is essential for effective mental health services and ongoing improvement.

We also advocate for prioritising community-based mental health services (CMHS) within an integrated healthcare system, focusing on early intervention and reducing reliance on emergency departments. CMHS should be recovery-oriented, trauma informed, and co-designed with individuals with lived experience, ensuring they are accessible and responsive to consumer need.

The RANZCP remains committed to building a sustainable mental health system in NSW. We would welcome the opportunity to collaborate further with the NSW Government on expanding training placements and supporting the mental health workforce. Please contact me via policy@ranzcp.org should you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely



Dr Elizabeth Moore
President