Media Release
11 April 2012

AMSA warns of impending internship crisis

AMSA President Mr James Churchill said today that the sharp and sustained increase in numbers of medical graduates is putting significant pressure on the clinical training system.

Mr Churchill said that the just-released 15th report of the Medical Training Review Panel shows that 3,512 medical students will graduate from Australian universities in 2012, which is more than double the number of graduates in 2006.

“This confirms the mismatch between the numbers of graduating doctors and the available internships,” Mr Churchill said.

“Urgent action is needed from all governments to avert a genuine medical internship crisis.

“Internship is a critical hurdle to obtain full registration as a medical practitioner and to progress to further training. This year, there is a real risk that medical graduates will miss out on an internship, leaving young doctors out of work and unable to serve the community.

“In addition to a potential shortage of internships, we are now also facing serious threats to the quality of training provided for interns. With graduate numbers surging, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure that all trainees receive the high quality teaching and supervision necessary to equip them with the skills Australians expect from their doctors.

“State and Federal Governments must ensure that all graduates of Australian medical schools are able to complete a quality internship and, beyond this, are able to progress through further medical training.

“Ultimately, if medical graduates are not able to complete a high quality internship, the ongoing increases in medical student numbers will have been a fruitless waste of taxpayer dollars,” Mr Churchill said.

Despite the internship crisis, the total number of medical students remains unregulated. AMSA continues to call for a coordinated national system of regulation that uses robust data to ensure student numbers are tailored to meet Australia’s health needs.

Media contact
Zoe Stewart
0435 052 570
publicrelations@amsa.org.au