

## Media Release

### Drug testing trial isn't necessary

**30 August 2017**

Addiction specialists have appeared before a Senate hearing on the Federal Government's drug testing trial and other measures proposed in the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform) Bill 2017.

During the public hearing, Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) President of the Chapter of Addiction Medicine, Dr Adrian Reynolds said:

"We are quite honestly at a loss to see why a drug testing trial is considered a necessary or effective way to address these issues.

"In fact the reasonable excuse and exemption provisions in the Government's proposed Bill are evidence that a large number of individuals with substance abuse problems are already identified. Why don't we focus on this group we already know about and encourage and refer this group to treatment on a voluntary basis?"

"Existing evidence shows drug testing welfare recipients is not an effective way of identifying those who use drugs and it will not bring about behaviour change. It is an expensive, unreliable and potentially harmful testing regime to find this group of people."

Dr Reynolds said addiction medicine specialists had not been consulted on the measures before they were announced in this year's Budget.

"Our analysis is that it will be costly and ineffective and the Government should consult with the sector on evidence-based solutions to better address and prevent substance abuse disorders and increase availability of treatment services," he said.

"We want to see people struggling with substance abuse problems get the help they need and we are keen to work with Government to help develop effective, evidence based policies that bring this about."

The RACP's submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's inquiry into Social Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform) Bill 2017 is available [here](#).

**Media contact: 0415 111 503**

**About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP):** The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 25,000 physicians and trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients. The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.