

# POLICY & ADVOCACY REPORT

Report for quarter Q3 July to September 2022  
*This report is valid until end of September 2022*

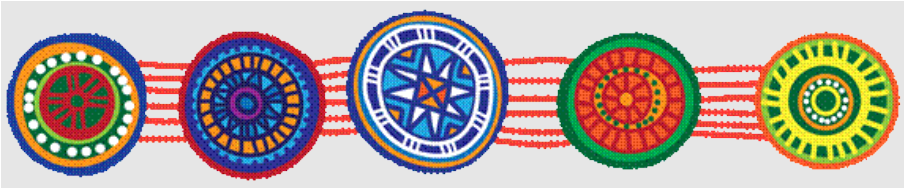
## The Royal Australasian College of Physicians

The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of over 20,000 physicians and almost 10,000 trainee physicians, across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The RACP represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, infectious diseases 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 and the community.

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*We acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians and Elders – past, present and emerging – of the lands and waters on which RACP members and staff live, learn and work. The RACP acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand.*





## Highlights

- In the aftermath of the May 2022 Election, P&A prepared an Australian Government Brief for the new Government. The brief sets out key areas where the RACP's policy priorities closely align with the commitments made by the Government prior and post-election and describes the contribution of expertise and experience our members can make towards the attainment of these goals.
- The document has been provided to relevant Government Ministers and Assistant Ministers, along with individual letters from the RACP President, Dr Jacqueline Small FRACP. It is also being used as a platform to engage with stakeholders and to support our meetings with Government and departmental officials.
- On 22 July 2022, the PRACP and Nicola Lewis, EGM, P&A met with Minister Butler to discuss shared priorities, including telehealth, children's health and wellbeing, health reform and integrated care. This productive meeting concluded with the Minister seeking a further opportunity to meet with the RACP to continue these conversations.
- At the request of Minister Butler during the July meeting, in August P&A provided him with an extensive policy brief that covered, among other subjects, NDIS, the National Roadmap for Intellectual Disability, child and young adult health, phone and video telehealth consultations, aged care and climate change and health.
- The PRACP and Chair of the College Council, Professor Nick Buckmaster FRACP, wrote an [opinion piece](#) on integrated care published in the Sydney-Morning Herald in August.
- Six organisations have now endorsed the RACP's KCCU campaign:
  - Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY),
  - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF),
  - Save the Children and 54 reasons,
  - The Obesity Policy Coalition,
  - Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and
  - Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID).



- In the lead up to the November 2023 Victorian State election, members of the Paediatric and Child Health Division, working in Victoria, have been surveyed to seek their views on the KCCU policy asks and explore how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their work and their patients. Responses will be used for advocacy.
- On September 14, P&A supported PRACP to host a working dinner on the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of the healthcare system, featuring Dr Nick Watts, Chief Sustainability Officer of the NHS England, in person. The dinner was attended by influential experts and advocates on climate change and health, including key College members.



- The Healthy Climate Future campaign continues to enjoy strong support from other medical colleges. A stand-alone Healthy Climate Future website, which features the logos of supporting colleges has been developed. The URL is [www.healthyclimatefuture.org.au](http://www.healthyclimatefuture.org.au). The website will be updated ahead of the Victorian Election in November. The website will allow members to easily ‘take action’ in support of the campaign. It can be modified for future elections, including the NSW Election in March 2023.



- A survey of members and other health professionals about the healthcare system’s environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change is underway, with more than 400 responses. The results will be used to generate newsworthy information in the lead up to coming elections.

- Meetings with key Federal Members of Parliament with an interest in climate change and health have taken place. In addition, meetings with relevant senior public servants at both the Federal and Victorian level (given the upcoming state election) have been held.
- The Federal Health Minister has requested advice from the Department of Health on the development of a National Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing Strategy – a key ask of the Healthy Climate Future campaign. We have met with the senior public servants responsible for providing this advice. In addition, we have met with Federal Treasury regarding the need to model the economic benefits of acting on climate change and health.

## First Nations Health and Equity

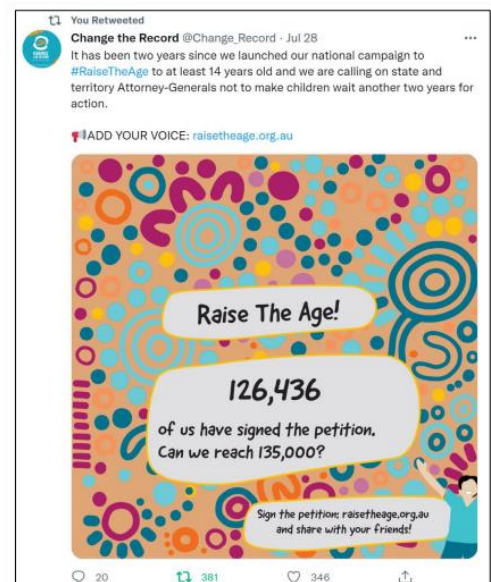
### The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee

- Of the 33 initiatives in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee (ATSIHC) Workplan 2022 & 2023, 32 are “on track,” with one scheduled to start later. ATSIHC has also been continuing to provide strategic direction and direct input into the RACP constitutional reform process to embed Indigenous knowledge, leadership and values in the RACP constitution.
- Planning is underway for a joint Board, ATSIHC and Māori Health Committee meeting in November 2022 that will include a focus on constitutional reform.

### Raise the Age

We continued our advocacy to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to a minimum of 14 years. Key activities have included:

- signing a joint letter with about 80 other organisations to the new Federal Attorney General, Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Federal Minister for Youth and Early Childhood Education. The letter encouraged Federal Government leadership about raising the age of criminal responsibility to a minimum of 14 years.
- supporting the Raise the Age campaign day of action in August 2022. The Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Linda Burney, and the Federal Attorney General, Mark Dreyfus, accepted a 200,000 strong



petition from the Raise the Age campaign, calling for governments across the country to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 14. The delivery of the petition received widespread positive media coverage including in News Ltd publications.

## **First Nations reporting activities**

- The RACP Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is in its second Reflect year. P&A staff have consulted with relevant RACP teams to complete the RAP Impact Questionnaire for 2021-2022. We will submit this form to Reconciliation Australia by 30 September.
- With all the positive work that has been achieved across the College we are excited to be able to advise that many of the strategies in the RAP have been implemented. We anticipate that given the successes we have had, that the College should be able to make its next RAP an “Innovate” RAP. An “Innovate” RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The Indigenous Strategic Framework (ISF) annual report is near completion and is due for reviewing and proofing. It will include some detailed reflections from Indigenous leadership to be included to ensure that the ISF remains on track and allows for reflection and truth telling on how we continue to implement the five priority areas in the ISF.

## **Member Engagement and College promotion**

- RACP will be attending and is a Silver Sponsor of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) Conference in October 2022. This year we will be delivering a workshop on workforce burnout and its importance for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforces. We will also be presenting about pathways to joining the College designed specifically for AIDA members who are all First Nations Doctors and Trainees. The RACP President Dr Jaqueline Small will also be attending the conference.

# **Health reform**

## **Integrated care and system reform**

- Positioning the College as a leader in clinical and health reform expertise and at the request of Minister Butler, P&A completed a rapid literature review comparing the outcomes of telephone

and video consultations to inform ongoing advocacy in this area. This information has been shared with the Minister, MPs and other stakeholders in support of advocacy for the reinstatement of all specialist telephone telehealth items.

- P&A continued to promote the College as a trusted advisor on system reform. Via briefings, meetings and other advocacy opportunities, we have highlighted our independent expertise in care integration, models of care, funding reform and workforce development as an effective approach to shaping the Government's system reform agenda. We have offered similar expertise in our recent meetings with MPs and their staff.
- The forthcoming Health Reform Working Group has sought expressions of interest for its membership. The Working Group will guide health reform priorities in College policy and advocacy over the next 5 years.
- P&A held meetings with the Australian Hospitals and Healthcare Association (AHHA) to discuss policy priorities of interest to the two organisations such as workforce planning, funding reform and integrated and data-driven models of care.
- We engaged with the AMA's proposal to reform the private health care sector via summit attendance and individual member feedback to drive further discussions in this space.

### **MBS telehealth reform**

- The College has continued its advocacy for the restoration of MBS specialist phone items via media releases, submissions, media coverage and meetings with key stakeholders, including Minister Butler, the Medical Board of Australia, the Australian National Audit Office and others.

### **Review of the National Medicines Policy**

- The College continued to engage in the review of the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care's National Medicines Policy (NMP). The College has attended two stakeholder meetings with Professor Michael Kidd, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, who leads the review; two submissions have already been made and the College is preparing its third submission to inform the NMP.



## Public health and prevention

- The College met with the Public Association of Australia (PHAA) on several occasions to discuss the ongoing advocacy in relation to the potential model for the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention and the need for a national training program to enhance the public health workforce. The College and its societies have also offered their expertise in this space to Minister Butler and several MPs with whom we have met during the reporting period.
- P&A attended the PHAA and AFPHM-led Population Health Congress on 21-23 September. The theme for the Congress was '*Towards a just, safe and sustainable future for Australasia*'. The Congress provided us with unique opportunities for working across organisations on key population health issues and discussing the best ways to drive the public health agenda.
- We contributed our expert knowledge and experience in the public and preventive health space through our meetings with MPs such as Dr Scamps and Dr Freeland FRACP and have partnered with organisations such as the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Cancer Council, the Obesity Collective and the Obesity Policy Coalition to amplify our respective campaigns to reduce alcohol-related harms and restrict junk food advertising and marketing to children and young people (e.g., [Every Moment Matters](#), [Kids Covid Catch Up](#), [Brands off Our Kids](#)).

## Evolve

Evolve is a flagship initiative led by physicians, specialties and the College to drive high-value, high-quality care in Australia and New Zealand.



- The Evolve Strategy 2022-2026 was developed by the Evolve Implementation Lead, informed by literature on the drivers of low-value care and associated interventions that may support the reduction of low-value care. Feedback from the College Policy & Advocacy Council (CPAC) and members informed the Evolve Strategy 2022 Consultation Summary and the second iteration of the Strategy and shaped the draft Evolve Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2026. The Consultation Summary, Strategy and Strategy Implementation Plan will be circulated for a



second broad consultation prior to finalisation.

- The Strategy presents the core streams of work for Evolve:
  - development and revision of recommendations on low-value practices;
  - recommendation education, dissemination, driving member support and implementation; and
  - monitoring and evaluation.
- Across these core streams the draft Strategy Implementation Plan highlights:
  - development of recommendations in consideration of the impact on equity;
  - ongoing reflection and adjustment for improvements in efficiency and impact; and
  - greater awareness and engagement of Evolve activities across RACP members and departments.
- The Strategy is underpinned by the leadership and involvement of RACP Members, Divisions, Chapters, Faculties and Specialty Societies.

## Climate and Justice

- On July 29, the PRACP addressed the AMA Conference regarding climate change and health, with P&A briefing and an RACP information stand in the Conference exhibition centre, focused on climate change and health.



- On August 4, the PRACP addressed the AHPPC, comprised of chief health officers nationally, regarding the RACP's research report on climate change and Australia's healthcare systems, with P&A briefing and support.

- On September 5, PRACP addressed the CAHA Better Futures Forum in Canberra, regarding the need for a national climate change and health strategy, with P&A briefing and support.
- On September 14, P&A supported PRACP to host a working dinner featuring Dr Nick Watts, Chief Sustainability Officer of the NHS England, in person. The dinner was attended by influential experts and advocates on climate change and health, including key members, CEO of NSLHD and President of PHAA. Whilst it was planned for Dr Watts to feature in Australian media coverage, this was unable to proceed due to NHS requirements related to the passing of the Queen.
- A member working group of 11 fellows and trainees has been established to develop a CPD course on climate change and health.
- The establishment of a member working group to update RACP climate change and health position statements is underway.

## Populations in Focus

### Paediatrics and Child Health

- Several international and national health events were used with social media opportunities, including World Breastfeeding week (1-7 Aug), Child Protection Week (5 Sept – 9 Sept) and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day (4 Aug ).
- Internal consultation of the Health Care of Children in Care and Protection Services Position Statement was conducted, and revision of the draft document is underway.
- A new working group has been formed and will be developing a new position statement on Youth Appropriate Health Care.
- Mental health has continued to be a key topic of interest and concern for PCHD members. To progress College involvement in this issue PCHD leadership have met with external organisations including: the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and the National Mental Health Commission.
- Members have also been involved in the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care’s review of drivers of antidepressant prescribing, both through focus groups and a major survey to

which 150 paediatricians responded.

- P&A have contributed to the PCHD 2023-25 Workplan with elements for PCHD Council, PPAC, CCCH and AYAM.

## Disability

- The NDIA convened a third meeting with the RACP in September to provide an update on the new person-centred model in place of independent assessments. College staff attended this meeting to provide input into the process for securing member feedback.

## Rehabilitation

- The new Bariatric Rehabilitation position statement is in final stages of approval with the AFRM. Once Faculty approval is confirmed the new position statement will be provided to CPAC for final approval for publication. Launch and dissemination of the new position statement will follow.
- P&A have contributed to the AFRM 2023-25 Workplan with elements for AFRM Council and FPAC.

## Palliative medicine

- In July P&A reached out to the AChPM President and President-Elect at the commencement of their new leadership roles to determine thoughts on priority AChPM areas. Identified areas have informed P&A items for the AChPM 2023-25 workplan. The draft workplan has been tabled for discussion at the next AChPM Committee on 27 September.

## COVID-19

- Several media releases were completed relating to [public health measures](#), [booster doses](#), the first phase of the 6 months to under 5 years vaccination rollout.
- There was also the announcement of the [Parliamentary Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated COVID Infections](#), to which Paediatrician and RACP Fellow, Dr Mike Freeland MP, has been appointed Committee Chair. Consultation has commenced to inform the development of a College submission to the Inquiry.
- Planning is underway for the next COVID-19 webinar series hosted by the RACP COVID-19 Expert Reference Group. The webinars will be held on 17 and 24 November and will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on First Nations communities. All webinars in the series are recorded and

are available to view on [Medflix](#).

## Health care of workers

- Key areas of activity related to the implementation of the National Dust Diseases Taskforce recommendations include:
  - **College membership on external committees:** National Occupational Respiratory Diseases Registry. This is a key foundation for the other Taskforce recommendations and for physicians' address of this issue. Strong advocacy efforts are being made to ensure the design is effective.
  - **Feedback on a Regulatory Impact Statement:** [joint submission](#) of AFOEM and TSANZ to the Safe Work Australia (SWA) Consultation Regulation Impact Statement on *Managing the risks of respirable crystalline silica at work*.
  - **Diagnosis and management of workers affected by silicosis:** meeting with the Department of Health and Aged Care regarding a joint AFOEM and TSANZ proposal for changes to the MBS needed to improve the diagnosis, treatment and management of people with silicosis or other occupational respiratory diseases.
  - **Aotearoa New Zealand:** a meeting with Worksafe NZ has been arranged to discuss the management of silicosis in AoNZ.
- An Expression of Interest is open for a new project to address occupational health and safety issues within the healthcare sector. This has been prompted in part by matters emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two new output focused working groups are being established – one is cross-College, and the other is AFOEM-centred.



## Aged Care

- Key issues and solutions have been developed and discussed with incoming Ministers. These centre on promoting better and easier access to consultant physician care. They include:

- Supporting Recommendation 58 from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety: Access to specialists and other health practitioners through Multidisciplinary Outreach Services.
- Improving assessment provisions in primary and secondary care.
- Introducing integrated two-way health care continuums (between community-based care and hospital care).
- A focus on older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health care needs, especially early condition assessment and comprehensive condition management.

## Supporting people with substance use disorders and gambling addiction

- In July 2022, the AChAM led a [submission to the Parliament of Western Australia's Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities](#). This AChAM-led submission outlines the principles which need to be followed by rehabilitation facilities which provide support for people with substance use disorder. It also makes the case for sustained, long-term funding to increase the capacity of drug and alcohol services to meet the demand for treatment, combined with real and persistent efforts to reduce disadvantage and inequities within society, as the only real solution to reducing substance dependence and related problems.
- After the College was made aware that **medications used in the Opiate Dependence Treatment Program in Australia** would be significantly affected by the scheduled Statutory Price Reductions, the AChAM President, Professor Adrian Dunlop FACHAM and the RACP President, wrote to the Minister for Health to request that Minister Butler exercise his discretion to guarantee ongoing availability of these important PBS-listed medicines to thousands of patients. We have since received a response from Minister Butler indicating that "there is no intention for the reforms to have an adverse outcome on patient access to important treatments."
- Professor Dunlop attended the **Rethink Addiction** Convention in Canberra. The College and AChAM are partners of the [Rethink Addiction Campaign](#) which aims to educate and advocate for the need to change Australia's attitude and approach to addiction.
- AChAM President and President-Elect, Professor Dunlop and Professor John Saunders FACHAM, met with Dr Shalini Arunogiri, Chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists' (RANZCP) Faculty of Addiction Psychiatry and agreed to jointly review the RANZCP



Problem Gambling Position Statement published in 2017. The RANZCP is establishing a working group comprising both RANZCP and AChAM members to update the position statement.

## Aotearoa New Zealand

- In June 2022, the RACP supported the Ministry of Education's proposed changes to the promotion and provision of healthy drinks in schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- In July 2022, the RACP welcomed the Ministry of Health's proposal to extend the Schedule of the Specified Prescription Medicines for Designated Registered Nurse Prescribers 2016 to include oral antiviral medicines Paxlovid and Lagevrio for the treatment of COVID-19.
- In August 2022, the RACP supported the proposals in the Smokefree environments and regulated products (smoked tobacco) amendment bill as transformative and world-leading steps towards the elimination of smoking in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- In August 2022, the RACP supported an AChSHM recommendation to endorse the Joint Letter to the New Zealand Government calling for urgent action on the Monkeypox (MPX) virus infection.

## Regional advocacy

Between July and September regional committees had their first and second meetings with new memberships and chairs and began to plan their advocacy for the current three-year term.

Advocacy conducted in this period included:

- Meeting with Northern Territory Chief Minister and Health Minister Natasha Fyles, covering youth justice concerns:
  - Reports of self-harm at Don Dale Youth Justice Centre.
  - Use of spit hoods and other problematic physical restraints by police (even though no longer at Don Dale).
  - Paucity of resources for developmental disability assessments in and out of custody.
  - Delays implementing Don Dale Royal Commission recommendations.
  - Government's plans to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12, not 14.
  - Alternatives to criminal justice responses for undesirable youth conduct.
  - Concerning increase in number of children in detention (especially Indigenous children).
- Next steps are to meet with the NT ministers for Families, Disability, and Police.

- Made representations to the NT Chief Minister’s office about leaked plans to reorganise senior department staff at Royal Darwin Hospital – we secured an undertaking to pause proposed sackings until proper consultation takes place.
- Meeting with senior QLD Health executives and ministerial advisor covering the proposed expansion of pharmacy prescribing in Queensland, in which we:
  - raised concerns about the process, the lack of consultation and transparency, and the risks of proceeding without physician input/expertise,
  - suggested measures to maximise patient outcomes and patient safety,
  - queried protocols for recording, reporting, and investigating adverse outcomes,
  - queried referral pathways and protocols for referring patients to a medical practitioner, especially when the relevant medical practitioner is a non-GP specialist, and
  - queried arrangements to ensure that the pilot increases patient access to medicines in an equitable way.
- Consultation with the QLD Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Team, including briefing the Queensland Regional Committee.
- Victorian election advocacy planned.
- Meeting with Victorian health executives to discuss elements of the election advocacy.
- Survey of Victorian paediatricians to support Kids’ COVID Catch Up advocacy in Victoria.
- Letter to the Tasmanian Health Minister, seeking to develop a relationship.
- Letter to the South Australian Health Minister, seeking to develop a relationship.
- Letter to the South Australian Health Minister supporting concerns expressed by SAINT Trainees’ Committee about wellbeing and safety at Women’s and Children’s Hospital in Adelaide.
- Planning with the WA Cancer Council and RACS’ WA Trauma Subcommittee for advocacy on Minimum Unit Pricing.

## Submissions and endorsements

- RACP [submission](#) to the Australian National Audit Office’s Audit of Expansion of Telehealth Services

- [Submission](#) to the Consultation Paper on the Pricing Framework for Australian Public Hospital Services 2023–24
- [Submission](#) to the WA Legislative Assembly’s Education and Health Standing - Inquiry into the Esther Foundation
- [Feedback](#) to the AMA Consultation Paper, *A whole of system approach to reforming private healthcare*
- Endorsement for FARE’s ‘Every Moment Matters’ FASD Campaign.
- Endorsement for the Australian Commission in Health Care Quality and Safety’s [Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard](#)
- AFRM submission to the ACT Disability Strategy
- Submission regarding the National Disability Advocacy Framework
- PCHD submission to [National Guideline for supporting the learning, participation, and wellbeing of autistic children and their families in Australia.](#)
- Submission to the proposed changes to the Recommended Use of Zoster vaccines
- Endorsement of the Australian ADHD Professionals Association’s Australian evidence based clinical practice guideline for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Submission to the ACT mandatory reporting by health practitioners: Fitness to drive
- Submission to the Safe Work Australia (SWA) Consultation [Regulation Impact Statement](#) on Managing the risks of respirable crystalline silica at work
- AChAM-led [submission to the Parliament of Western Australia’s Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities](#)

## Media and advocacy

### September

Media releases:

- [RACP: Some positive changes and welcome funding for drug treatment, but more needed to comprehensively address drug policy reform | 23 September 2022](#)
- [RACP welcomes Inquiry into long COVID led by paediatrician Dr Mike Freeland MP | 6 September 2022](#)

Media coverage:

- [Australian Long COVID inquiry | Medical Forum, 8 Sep 2022](#)
- [‘Climate change is already killing Australians’: Calls for urgent rollout of climate-health action plan | SBS News, 5 Sep 2022](#)
- [Call for urgent climate-health action plan | The Border Mail, 5 Sep 2022](#)



- [‘Already killing Australians’: Health professionals unite on urgent climate change message](#) | Women’s Agenda, 5 Sep 2022
- [Climate change: Health leaders’ call to implement a plan that will save lives](#) | Inside Ageing, 5 Sep 2022
- [The number of complaints against Victorian chiropractors has been revealed, along with punishments](#) | Geelong Advertiser, 3 Sep 2022

## August

Media releases:

- [Paediatricians welcome vaccines for at-risk children under five](#) | 4 August 2022
- [Physicians support push to ban junk food advertising aimed at children](#) | 8 August 2022

Media coverage:

- [Paediatricians float solutions for deteriorating access](#) | newsGP, 31 Aug 2022
- [Don’t over-do MRIs for headache](#) | Medical Republic, 29 Aug 2022
- [Ice and amphetamine dealing offences rise in the Hunter, amid calls for drug reform in NSW in line with recommendations from the special commission of inquiry into ice](#) | Maitland Mercury, 26 Aug 2022
- [The healthcare revolution we all need: a one-stop shop, from GP to specialist](#) | Sydney Morning Herald, 18 Aug 2022
- [Radio Interview](#) | Ultra106 Five, 9 August
- [Adolescent COVID-19 vaccine study ‘very encouraging’ for hesitant parents](#) | Sydney Morning Herald, 8 August
- [Non-COVID deaths are up a significant amount this year. What's driving the increase?](#) | ABC News, 8 Aug 2022

## July

Media releases:

- [RACP welcomes ATAGI decision on COVID-19 vaccine booster doses](#) | 8 July 2022
- [Physicians urge general public to take precautions now, as new COVID wave bites](#) | 14 July 2022
- [Government should reverse Telehealth wind back as report shows crucial role](#) | 8 July 2022
- [Paediatricians issue vaccination plea after diphtheria cases identified](#) | 6 July 2022
- [Physicians partner with Thrive by Five for early learning reform](#) | 11 July 2022

Media coverage:

- [Geelong rheumatologist shortage causing hip pocket pain, as regions being left behind](#) | Geelong Advertiser, 26 July 2022
- [Radio Interview](#) | ABC Sydney, 13 July
- [RACP latest organisation to partner with Thrive by Five and call for reform](#) | The Sector, 12 July

- ['Second worst in world': Push to extend paid parental leave](#) | The Daily Telegraph, 12 July
  - Syndicated to The Australian, NT News, Courier Mail, Adelaide Advertiser, and other regional and metro NewsCorp outlets

## Doctors push for longer baby leave

**SUE DUNLEVY**

DOCTORS want paid parental leave extended from four to 12 months because parental care is better for the baby than childcare in the first year of life.

Australia had the second worst paid parental leave scheme in the developed world and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), which represents paediatricians – the doctors who care for children – said on Monday that extending early childhood care was critical.

“The evidence shows that exclusive parental care fosters improved maternal and child health with improved developmental outcomes for the child,” RACP president and paediatrician Dr Jacqueline Small said.

The benefits included higher rates of breastfeeding and lower rates of maternal depression and lower infant mortality, she said.

In their first years, children form more than one million new neural connections every second and 90 per cent of brain growth occurs by the age of five.

Currently, our government’s paid parental leave scheme provides just 18 weeks pay at the minimum wage, while the secondary carer gets two weeks.

The Parenthood’s executive director Georgie Dent said the average amount of paid parental leave offered by developed countries was 50 weeks.

- [News in brief: Dupilumab gains registration for paediatric uncontrolled asthma; Novel COPD treatment target identified by Aussie researchers; Gender discrimination still rife in medicine: RACP](#) | The Limbic, 8 July
- [How street medic Dr Daniel keeps the fire burning](#) | The Canberra Times, 7 July
- [Physicians partner with Thrive by Five for early learning reform](#) - The Educator, 13 Jul 2022
- [New push for paid maternity leave to be extended to 12 months](#) – Body and Soul (News.com.au), 13 Jul 2022
- ABC Brisbane interview - Part 1 | Part 2, 12 Jul 2022
- ABC South East SA interview, 12 Jul 2022
- ABC Sydney interview (from 20:21 to 28:20), 13 Jul 2022
- 2GB radio grabs, 12 Jul 2022
- 2SM radio grabs, 12 Jul 2022, Syndicated to local community radio stations such as 4GY, 2PM and 2NZ



- 4BC radio grabs, 12 Jul 2022
- 6PR radio mention, 12 Jul 2022
- CAAMA radio grabs, 12 Jul 2022
- Ch 7 News, 12 Jul 2022
- Ch9 Afternoon News, 12 Jul 2022, Syndicated to Ch9 metro and regional stations

- [Labor slammed for refusing to extend telehealth services](#) | The West Australian, 2 July
- [Medication naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses free from July 1](#) | NT News, 1 July
- [Pharmacist naloxone program extended](#) | Medical Republic, 1 July
- [Overworked, understaffed and burning out: hospital pharmacy in 2022](#) | Australian Journal of Pharmacy – July 2022 Edition, 1 July

## Stakeholder meetings

- 14 July: PHAA - Terry Slevin (CEO), Malcolm Baalman, Dr Leanne Coombe (P&A Manager)
- 12 July: Prof Frank Oberklaid
- 13 July: RANZCP
- 14 July: Dr Kate Charlesworth
- 18 July: Consumer Health Forum - Jo Root (Policy Director), Leanne Wells (outgoing CEO) Rebecca Edwards (Consumer and Community Engagement Adviser)
- 18 July: MBS Policy and Specialist Services Branch, DoHA
- 18 July: Kelly Fischer, Primary Care Reform Taskforce
- 19 July: Prof Allen Cheng
- 19 July: AACP - Dr Terry Stubberfield, Janine Sargent EO
- 19 July: Kylie Woolcock, CEO AHHA
- 22 July: CMO Paul Kelly
- 26 July: Northern Territory Chief Minister
- 5 August: QUM section, DOHA
- 9 August: Department of Health & Aged Care
- 19 August: National Mental Health Commission - Lyndall Soper, Deputy CEO and Alex Hains, Executive Director
- 25 August: RACGP
- 30 August: Vic Dept of Health Dep Sec Public Health Zoe Wainer
- 1 September: Vic Dep CHO Deborah Friedman
- 2 September: Lara Purdy, Assistant Secretary Environmental Health and Health Protection Policy Branch, DOHA
- 5 September: Mary Warner and Alex Behm
- 6 September: AMA Policy Manager and Policy Officer
- 6 September: AMA - Prof Stephen Robson, AMA Federal President, Warwick Hough, AMA A/g Secretary General, Luke Toy, AMA General Manager Advocacy
- 7 September: Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Secretary, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Branch, Dept of Education

- 7 September: DELWP, Julie Web
- 8 September - Treasury - Nerida Hunter, Assistant Secretary, Health, Aged Care and Disability Branch, Social Policy Division, Fiscal Group; Rebecca Casselles Assistant Secretary CBR Structural Analysis Branch | Macroeconomic Analysis Policy Division, Mark Muscat
- 9 September: PHAA - Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, CEO
- 20 September: NDIA
- 21 September: Karla Lister, First Assistant Secretary, Newborn Bloodspot Section
- 23 September: Dr Sophie Scamps MP, member for Mackellar

## Government relations

- 11 July: Dr Sophie Scamps MP and Harry Martin, Principal Adviser
- 22 July: Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care
- 9 August: Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant minister for Rural and Regional Health
- 26 August: Dr Mike Freeland MP
- 6 September: Dr Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi
- 6 September: Adviser to Senator David Pocock
- 6 September: Dr David Gillespie, MP Federal Member for Lyne
- 23 September: Dr Sophie Scamps MP, member for Mackellar

## Your feedback

We understand the importance of feedback. If you have the time, please complete a 2-question survey to help us understand if this is a helpful report and any improvements.

[Complete survey here](#)

## P&A TEAM

For more information, contact the Policy and Advocacy Team  
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