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**NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL – GOOD INTENTION UNDERMINED BY
 BAD POLICY**

The AMA is pleased that the impasse over medical school places on the Sunshine Coast has been resolved, with a commitment to 50 Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) announced today, but good intention has been undermined by bad policy.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that the AMA has supported the establishment of the new medical school, provided total national medical student numbers do not increase.

“We welcome the fact that the Government has partly listened to our arguments, with the overall number of CSP medical school places across the country remaining unchanged,” Dr Gannon said.

“The 50 CSP places on the Sunshine Coast have been reallocated from other medical schools.

“However, the AMA understands that, as part of the negotiations with other medical schools, the Commonwealth has been forced to agree to support the recruitment of additional international full fee paying medical students at those universities that have given up places.

“This comes on top of the decision by Macquarie University to establish a new \$250,000 medical degree course, a move that prices a medical degree out of reach for many of our best and brightest students.

“The policy focus must be on the maldistribution of doctors and shortages in particular specialty areas, not supporting universities to boost their bottom line.

“We are graduating record numbers of medical students, putting us well above the OECD average. But we are not providing enough prevocational and specialist training places for our medical graduates. Next year, we face a shortage of 569 first year advanced specialist training places.

“We must address community need by supporting extra prevocational and vocational training places, otherwise access to medical care will continue to be a problem in many parts of the country.

“The downside of the Sunshine Coast Medical School announcement is that we have unfortunately seen another example of where horse trading has replaced good medical workforce planning and policy.

“The Government needs to take a much tougher approach to full fee paying medical school places, both for domestic and international students.

“Working with the AMA and other groups will ensure that policy settings genuinely tackle the medical workforce problems we now face,” Dr Gannon said.

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