



ANZCA

FPM

10 April 2025

Mike Pope
Acting Assistant Secretary, Workforce Training Branch
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

Via email: mike.pope@health.gov.au

CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Dear Mike

With the announcement of the upcoming federal election in May 2025, we understand the Australian Government is now operating in accordance with caretaker conventions pending the outcome of the election. I understand this is unavoidable and normal business operations; however I wanted to communicate the concerns and impact this has on the college in terms of the future of Specialist Training Program (STP) funding beyond current funding arrangements.

STP funding is critical to the college providing and enabling training posts and program supports in anaesthesia and pain medicine (particularly in rural and regional areas); and is now a pivotal component of creating additional capacity and opportunities in specialist training positions. This would be similar in the other medical colleges that utilise STP.

Delays in communicating the outcome of the STP review, impacts to Flexible Approach to Training in Expanded Settings (FATES) round four outcomes and project timings, and confirming the amount and duration of funding for programs such as STP carries the risk of reducing the uptake of funding in rural and regional training sites and, ultimately, fewer trainees in those areas. In the short-term it also makes things operationally difficult when advising and communicating with regional sites, ensuring they're not seen as disadvantaged. This is particularly critical when employment arrangements are tied to this funding with direct impact to individuals where this can determine whether their employment will continue.

Unfortunately, some of these decisions and/or communications to colleges were already delayed, which adds to the impact of caretaker conventions. The overall delays also reduce confidence in the program and the college amongst stakeholders and impacts any efforts to establish regional and rural training networks.

Our college is also concerned of any potential budget implications depending on the timing, uptake and/or any changes with any government change/s.

I appreciate that your team has communicated the operation of caretaker conventions and STP, however we are happy to work with you to ensure suitable measures are in place regarding the future of the program and to avoid any undue pressures and/or steps the college can have in place in the meantime to expedite program outcomes following the May 2025 election outcome.

Please direct any queries to Lincoln Hoye, ANZCA STP Manager lhoye@anzca.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Fidgeon
Chief Executive Officer