



Australia's peak pain organisations for health professionals welcome national pain management plan

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The Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and the Australian Pain Society (APS) today welcomed the release of the Australian government's National Strategic Action Plan for Pain Management.

FPM Dean Dr Meredith Craigie, a specialist pain medicine physician and anaesthetist from Adelaide, who played a key role in developing the strategy with the government and other stakeholders, said it was an important step forward in ensuring that the one in five Australians living with chronic pain were supported and given access to appropriate treatment.

"We hope this plan will spur federal and state governments to provide the necessary funding and support for people with chronic pain conditions to access timely and affordable treatment. As specialist pain medicine physicians the faculty has long recognised that a combination of therapies including exercise, psychological skills training and appropriately chosen medical interventions is the most effective treatment," Dr Craigie said.

"It's important to note that many doctors already recognise this and would welcome the opportunity for more education to help them treat chronic pain. It is vital that we not only work with patients to help them manage their pain but also help educate the community about pain and how it is treated."

Australian Pain Society President Dr Anne Burke, a psychologist and health service manager, said "ensuring timely access to high quality, multidisciplinary care is essential for the large number of people who are living with chronic pain in this country. We need better access in community settings – providing the right care close to home so that people can get back into the driver's seat and take control of their lives."

"Far too many people are forced to endure very long and indefinite waits for treatment at pain clinics - during which their function and quality of life declines - because they cannot afford to access evidence-based multidisciplinary care in their community. We need to stop this! This National Action Plan for pain management represents an opportunity for a co-ordinated approach to health care reform that has the potential to significantly improve people's lives and reduce the burden that pain places on our economy. It's time to act!"

The Faculty of Pain Medicine is the specialty body that sets standards in pain medicine in Australia and is responsible for education and training. Pain medicine is multidisciplinary, recognising that the management of severe pain requires the skills of more than one area of medicine.

Pain medicine is a two year post-specialty for doctors, including GPs, psychiatrists, rehabilitation specialists, physicians, anaesthetists and surgeons.

The Australian Pain Society is a multidisciplinary organisation aiming to minimise pain and related suffering through advocacy and leadership in clinical practice, education and research. Our national membership is drawn from over 40 health disciplines covering a variety of medical, nursing and allied health perspectives.