RACGP 2025–29 Strategy

David Wilkinson

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners must not only focus on the here and now but also look over the horizon to ensure we maximise the opportunities that lie ahead.

As I review the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP's) 2025–29 Strategy, I see a clear vision for the next five years during what is described as a crucial moment for general practice in Australia.

Our College stands as Australia's largest specialist medical body with more than 50,000 members, training 90% of the nation's general practitioners (GPs). Our responsibility extends beyond member support to improving health outcomes for all Australians through advocacy, education, research and policy influence.

I am struck by the emphasis on the fundamental importance of the GP–patient relationship. Patients experience better outcomes when treated by a GP who knows them well. Yet, I notice that the quiet, preventative nature of our work often leads to its importance being underestimated by decision makers.

The challenges facing us are significant; Australia is predicted to have a shortfall of more than 5500 full-time equivalent GPs by 2033, while 9 in 10 Australians visit a GP annually, resulting in 164.5 million episodes of care each year. Better supporting general practice could prevent 700,000 hospitalisations and save the health system more than $4.5 billion annually.

There are several shifting factors in our healthcare environment:
- Changing funding models with pressure on Medicare.
- Regulatory changes expanding scope of practice.
- Evolving patient care needs with an ageing population.
- Workforce challenges including remuneration gaps and burnout.
- Commercial competition and care fragmentation.
- Technological advancements including artificial intelligence.

In response, the RACGP has established four strategic focus areas:
1. **An outstanding Fellowship** with the intent to create a strong, united community where members value their RACGP Fellowship. The priorities include lifelong learning, peer collegiality, practice viability, member benefits and international engagement, aiming to increase members' wellbeing, satisfaction and participation in RACGP activities.
2. **A flourishing GP workforce** with the goal to train world-class GPs prepared to address Australia's health needs, recognising priorities such as promoting general practice as desirable, flexible learning approaches, funded training places, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approaches, GP wellbeing and rural workforce distribution.
3. **A future-ready profession** to position general practice as a driver of healthcare innovation by leveraging digital technologies, enabling GP innovation

leadership, building strategic partnerships and cultivating research.
4. **General practice at the heart of the health system** with intent to establish RACGP as the recognised voice for GPs in healthcare policy through thought leadership, health economics approaches, government relations, external partnerships and advocacy networks.

The Strategy is underpinned by the College's organisational values of progressive leadership, ethics, professionalism and quality. This approach positions us to be proactive in driving change rather than merely reacting to it, emphasising that we must 'not only focus on the here and now but also look over the horizon'.

This five-year plan aims to transform both our College and the broader field of general practice, ensuring a sustainable future where GPs remain at the centre of Australia's healthcare system, delivering high-quality, accessible care to all Australians.

More information about the Strategy can be found at www.racgp.org.au/the-racgp/about-us/racgp-2025-29-strategy.

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