



Health Care Reform, Health care Reform, Health Care Reform

What does it all mean?
What does this mean for GP Links Wide Bay?
What does this mean for General Practice?
What is actually being reformed?

There have been several major reports – the National Health and Hospitals Commission, The Preventative Health Care Task Force and the Primary Care Strategy as well as many policy documents from Australian Divisions of General Practice, The RACGP and the AMA, amongst others.

BUT WHAT HAS THE COMMONWEALTH ACTUALLY COMMITTED TO?

To answer this one needs to refer to the

The Commonwealth Heads of Government (COAG) National Health and Hospital Network Agreement of April 2010.

http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2010-04-19/docs/NHHN_Agreement.pdf

I recommend to you all to access this document as it outlines the actual Government commitments. It can only be withdrawn with the agreement of both houses of parliament and all the States.

COAG Agreement outlines the development of regional networks of which Primary Health Care Organisations will have an integral role. PHCO's roles and responsibilities will include much of the work currently done by Divisions of General Practice with extension to the broader Primary care workforce, measuring and reporting regional primary health care performance and in time responsibility for most of the currently state controlled services such as Home and Community Care Programs.

The Commonwealth has advised that funding for Divisions of General Practice will cease after June 2012. Tasks currently undertaken with Commonwealth funding for Divisions will be transferred to the new Primary Health Care Organisations after June 2012

GP Links Wide Bay is an independent legal entity and the Commonwealth funding that will cease currently comprises about 50% of its overall budget.

The Board of GP Links Wide Bay has recommended:

That the Wide Bay region should seek to become a PHCO with boundaries largely the same as GPLWB

To develop a new company to undertake the PHCO's tasks;

To retain GPLWB as the link to GPs, practices and health professionals and to develop its commercial opportunities.

It remains to be seen how the new Government will approach the COAG agreement. Watch this space.

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