

# MEDIA STATEMENT



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5 May 2010

## AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR DOCTORS MEETS GOOD PRACTICE

In his report tabled in Parliament today, Auditor General Colin Murphy has found the Medical Board of Western Australia (MBWA) is complying with the requirements of the *Medical Practitioners Act 2008* and is ensuring that medical services provided in WA are done so by properly qualified doctors who meet appropriate standards.

"Our testing showed that the Medical Board have policies and procedures in place to verify the qualifications and practice history of both Australian and overseas-trained doctors," Mr Murphy said.

The Medical Board follows a nationally consistent approach to assessing applications from doctors who completed their primary medical qualification overseas. They check identity, qualifications, skills, English language and professional history.

Mr Murphy noted that as of March there were almost 9 000 doctors registered to practice in Western Australia and a random sample of recently registered doctors showed that approximately half were trained overseas.

"We found the State's medical register to be accurate and up to date, however we did have some concerns with weak internal security of the register," he said.

The report found that MBWA did not have a policy for information systems security, password management was weak, all staff had full access to modify the register, generic logins are used and criminal record checks had not been conducted on staff. However, controls to stop external access were effective.

"Internal security of the register is important in reducing the risk of mistakes being made and to stop fraudulent entries, which could compromise the accuracy of the register," Mr Murphy said.

The report also found that the MBWA was effective in handling complaints against doctors, ensuring the correct processes were followed, appropriate action was taken and any ongoing penalties were monitored.

MBWA, along with all other medical boards in Australia, has been introducing nationally consistent registration practices in preparation for the introduction of a national registration scheme on 1 July 2010.

The national scheme was agreed to by COAG in March 2008 so that medical professionals, including doctors, meet the same standards and go through the same registration processes, across Australia.

"The life or death role played by medical practitioners makes the functions of the Board critically important and I am pleased to report that for the most part they are operating effectively."

The complete Public Sector Performance Report 2010 (Report 3 – May 2010) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au)

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**NOTE TO MEDIA** – the *Public Sector Performance Report* (Report 3 - May 2010) tabled in Parliament today, also includes the Auditor General's opinions on three 'Ministerial Notifications' (ministerial decisions not to provide information to Parliament). These opinions are outlined in a separate media release, which is available at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au)