

Laboratories “Unravelling at the Seams” – Pathologists Warn Canadian Precedence of Great Concern

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) has called on the State and Federal Governments to heed the warnings of the Canadian pathologists that the profession is in crisis, as published recently in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* and the *Globe and Mail*.

In a bold editorial, the President of the Canadian Association of Pathologists, Dr Jagdish Butany, said Canada’s hospital laboratories were “unravelling at the seams” and the accuracy of all medical tests would continue to be put at risk unless governments invested significant funding to repair the ailing Canadian system.

The President of the RCPA, Dr Bev Rowbotham, said the Australian situation was quickly heading in the same dire direction as the Canadian one.

“We’ve been highlighting the fact that pathology is in crisis in Australia for a number of years,” says Dr Rowbotham.

“We have brought this issue to all levels of the State and Federal government, and other government bodies, to find solutions, however, to date they have not addressed the problems in a meaningful way, or acted on any of the suggestions we have made to them.

“Pathologists cannot be left out of the healthcare equation. Put simply, without pathology, there cannot be a healthcare system.

“Pathology is the conduit through which all medical diagnosis is determined – including all detected cancers – as well as disease monitoring, treatment, the safe processing of blood transfusions, prenatal screening ... the list of the areas impacted goes on.

“Despite the excellent pathology accreditation and quality systems we have in place in Australia, the workforce crisis puts tremendous pressure on pathologists in making diagnoses, increasing the risk of mistakes happening.”

Similarly to the Canadian Association’s call for Governments to dedicate resources to address the major shortage of pathologists, the RCPA calls on State and Federal governments across Australia to work constructively with the profession – and begin to look for strategies and solutions to the global shortage.

“After all, Medicine *is* Pathology.”

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