

Government presents collaborative approach to Pathology crisis

Australasia's peak medical diagnostic body, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA), is encouraged by positive indications from the Minister of Health, the Hon Tony Ryall, towards addressing the pathology crisis facing New Zealand, following a meeting with the Minister late yesterday afternoon.

CEO of the RCPA, Dr Debra Graves, says despite repeated calls for the previous government to address the numerous critical issues surrounding pathology services in New Zealand, it had not paid heed to the College's warnings.

"We are encouraged by the new Minister of Health's collaborative approach and willingness to work with us on ways forward," says Dr Graves.

"Pathology remains at crisis point in New Zealand.

"We have too few pathologists, we are not training enough for the future, and the tendering process implemented at the District Health Board level for pathology services has had an incredibly destabilising effect on the profession.

"It is urgent that all levels of government recognise pathology as a clinical medical service – not an ancillary support service – because pathology is the basis of all medical practice.

"It is imperative that the workforce shortage and the state of the working environment – the commoditising contracts – be addressed to permit pathologists and laboratories to plan for the future, and invest in catering for the health of New Zealanders.

"We welcome the opportunity for appropriate dialogue, and importantly, action, with the current Minister and his team."

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Dr Debra Graves
RCPA
+61 (417) 218 528

or

Andrea Plawutsky
S2i Communications
+61 (419) 970 984