

7 December 2006

Rt Hon Helen Clark  
Prime Minister  
PO Box 18888  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington  
New Zealand

Dear Prime Minister

We are writing to you on behalf of The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia to raise concerns about the uncoordinated restructuring of pathology services in New Zealand, and the potential impact of this on the quality of pathology service provision.

Pathology is crucial to the medical process; deterioration in the quality of pathology services will compromise the whole medical system. The College must alert Governments when their policies could have dire consequences for the provision of quality pathology services. In this instance, those consequences relate primarily to adverse effects on the pathology workforce.

We have raised our concerns repeatedly with your Health Minister, Mr Pete Hodgson, and we attach the relevant correspondence for your reference. To date we have not received an adequate response to these issues.

There is a recognised international crisis in the pathology workforce, yet Mr Hodgson refuses to accept that this also applies to New Zealand. He is relying on Clinical Training Agency data which are seriously flawed, as indicated in the attached correspondence.

The long term consequence of the uncoordinated restructuring of pathology services is likely to be destabilisation of the pathologist workforce. Should pathologists in New Zealand become disillusioned, there is a ready job market for them in many other countries. This potential implications of this for pathology service provision are clear.

We urge you, Prime Minister, to consider the implications of the current pathology tendering processes and the likely adverse effects on the New Zealand pathology workforce and services. We seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stewart Bryant  
**President**



Dr Richard Steele  
**Vice President NZ**

Attach.