

31 October 2021

Dear Associate Professor Lakra,

RE: November 2021 AV OSCE

The NSW Association of Psychiatry Trainees (NAPT) has received feedback from many trainees regarding a communique released on Friday 29 October 2021 regarding the November AV-OSCE.

Trainees were particularly concerned by this section of the email: *“the OSCE scheduled for November may be deferred to a later date rather than risk proceeding with a product that may not be able to meet all the requirements by Saturday 20 November 2021.”*

As you are aware, NSW trainees have faced exceptional challenges in sitting the OSCE. This has been the result of an ongoing lack of contingency planning by RANZCP. Many NSW trainees have been preparing for this exam since the end of 2019 and have put their lives on hold in order to study multiple times for an exam that has subsequently been cancelled with short notice. Following the cancellation of the July MSOSCE NAPT advocated for alternative forms of assessment for these disadvantaged trainees. We are also aware of a letter signed by over 100 psychiatrists and over 120 trainees sent to the College asking for similar. These were rejected by the College without consideration or explanation. These same trainees are now in the midst of preparing again for this exam, and were dismayed to receive this ambiguous communique this Friday.

Studying for an exam when there is uncertainty as to whether the exam will go ahead is an extremely difficult experience for trainees. Many have expressed that they believe their preparedness to sit the exam has been affected by this uncertainty, in particular for those who have experienced multiple cancellations. Many trainees have scheduled study leave and organised their rosters around the 20 November 2021 exam date, having already had to shift these arrangements when RANZCP delayed the exam from 30 October 2021, the original exam date. Others have scheduled significant life events in the weeks following the exam. The ability of trainees to perform in the exam will be negatively impacted should the November AV OSCE be delayed yet again, thereby detrimentally impacting trainees welfare.

In light of the above, NAPT strongly advocates for the following: **All 37 NSW candidates who were enrolled to sit the July MSOSCE shall receive confirmation that they are guaranteed to sit the AV OSCE on 20 November 2021.** Should you foresee issues with the November AV OSCE going ahead due to software issues, then an alternative AV OSCE should be facilitated on 20 November 2021 for those who were impacted by the cancellation of the July MSOSCE, using the technology utilised in the April 2021 AV OSCE, which allowed for the successful assessment of 69 candidates.

As you may imagine, there is growing resentment within the NSW cohort of trainees regarding RANZCP. NSW trainees have expressed that they do not feel that the College has acted with professionalism or been accountable for its decisions, nor met the Australian Medical Council training obligations to allow trainees to progress towards Fellowship.

We expect to receive your response to our letter by close of business Thursday 4 November 2021. Alternatively, we request a face-to-face meeting by this date to discuss the concerns of NSW trainees, given the seriousness and timeliness of this issue.

Sincere regards,



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Cc:

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