



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**

Ms Penny Rogers  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Coalition of Public Pathology Inc  
PO Box 730  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

Dear Ms Rogers

**Quality Use of Pathology Program Project: *CAREER STRUCTURES AND PATHWAYS FOR THE SCIENTIFIC WORKFORCE IN MEDICAL PATHOLOGY LABORATORIES***

I am writing to you to inform you that an Information Paper has just been released on our departmental website as part of a consultation process that will be occurring over the next six weeks to seek input from relevant stakeholders on the current state and future sustainability of the scientific workforce groupings (entry level through to highly specialised). Written submissions will be welcomed as part of this consultation process, which will also include consultations with representatives of those workforce groupings as well as approximately 20 employers from a range of different organisations. The project is being undertaken by Human Capital Alliance (International) Pty Ltd (HCA), whose team is led by Mr Lee Ridoutt who is a very experienced workforce planner.

The background to this project is that, during the *Patient Safety and Quality in Pathology Workshop* convened by the department in November 2007, the capacity of the pathology workforce to be able to respond to growing demand in the face of an ageing population and an ageing workforce was identified as the highest priority issue in terms of its potential to affect the quality of pathology services into the future. Since that time, the department has worked with relevant stakeholder groups to develop a series of projects that would provide further insights into various aspects of the pathology workforce sustainability issue.

This particular project is designed to collect information on how the scientific workforce is currently structured in both the Australian setting and comparable overseas jurisdictions and to examine what strategies are being used to both create efficiencies and to encourage attraction and retention of skilled staff. The project was endorsed by the Quality Use of Pathology Committee and is being guided by representatives from the relevant scientific professional organisations in order to ensure that all disciplines are adequately covered. Further details about the *Career Structures and Pathways for the Scientific Workforce in Medical Pathology Laboratories* project can be found at **Attachment 1**.

The Information Paper (which is at **Attachment 2**) has been prepared by HCA as a resource document to prompt discussion. The paper defines the workforce boundaries under consideration, explores the key features of how medical pathology laboratory work and the scientific workforce are currently organised, and seeks feedback from stakeholders and their views on what strategies would assist in promoting the attraction and retention of the various workforce groupings. The information paper can also be accessed on the internet at [www.health.gov.au/qupp](http://www.health.gov.au/qupp) .

In addition to meeting with scientific workforce representatives, HCA is currently in the process of contacting employer representatives to finalise their schedule of 20 consultations with a cross section of public and private employers from around Australia. They will be particularly interested to meet with employers who may have actively explored innovative ways to organise their workforce to achieve quality outcomes using efficient strategies to make best use of the available workforce.

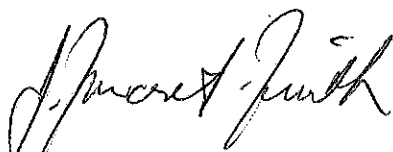
I would like to invite you to encourage your members' participation in this project in order to ensure that there is robust involvement from the public sector, both in terms of direct employer participation and input from the scientific workforce in that sector. As stated above, written submissions will be welcomed from all interested parties and should be provided by **COB 15 April 2011** to:

QUPP Secretariat  
Department of Health and Ageing  
MDP 852  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Email: [qupp@health.gov.au](mailto:qupp@health.gov.au)

These submissions will be passed to HCA for analysis and incorporation into the discussion paper that will be prepared after the consultation process has been completed.

I look forward to NCOPP members' interest and active participation in this project so that its outcomes can be as useful as possible.

Yours sincerely



Jackie Stuart-Smith  
Assistant Secretary (Acting)  
Diagnostic Services Branch

9 March 2011