

Issues and Challenges Currently Facing the Practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Australia and New Zealand

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The vision and mission statements for the RANZCOG give fairly clear guidelines as to the principle functions of the College. This has been assisted by the more recent assessment of what are the essential components of a medical specialist. Where as in the past this only included the aspects of medical knowledge and practical expertise the expectations now are that a medical specialist will be expected to be

- A medical expert
- Communicator
- Collaborator
- Manager
- Health advocate
- Scholar
- Professional

There are two major issues that the College are presently addressing. Firstly, there is the issue of increasing involvement by government in aspects of clinical governance. As they are providing the funding and as they are finally responsible for the standards of health care it is reasonable that they take this role but the potential for government bodies and work-

ing parties to overtake the traditional roles of colleges needs to be watched carefully. At the same time, the roles of colleges and their resources to manage these roles need to be evaluated. The requirements in expertise in College House Staff have increased significantly over the last few years. At the same time there seems to be increasing reluctance by the Fellows to voluntarily contribute to College functions.

Some of the major challenges to the practice of O & G in Australia and New Zealand include the following;

- Fragmentation of the practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Workforce issues
- Medical indemnity
- Rural practice
- Attracting trainees
- Feminisation of the workforce
- Assessment of competence

The ethical issues associated with these challenges and the steps that have been taken to address some of them will be outlined during the presentation.

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