



Eastern Victoria GP Training

EV Engagement and Influencing Strategy

August 2020

Preamble

Eastern Victoria General Practice Training (EVGPT) is a not for profit company contracted by the Commonwealth of Australia to administer the Australian General Practice Training program facilitating training in the urban, regional and rural areas of Eastern Victoria. The work of EVGPT centres on providing training to develop a workforce that will provide high quality GP services and meet community needs now and in the future. We are committed to increasing the number of appropriately qualified general practitioners across our region with a focus on quality provision and retention.

Introduction

EV is currently in the second year of its second 3-year contract with DOH. In the course of our 4.5 years of operation, we have earned an excellent reputation with our local stakeholders and prospective GP trainees. We have constructive relationships with key industry players and our engagement levels in a number of areas are high.

Our challenge is to have increased presence, both locally and nationally, by strengthening our engagement in policy formation, training model development, training numbers and funding allocation. We also aspire to be more proactive in our region in the development of GP pipelines for our future sustainability. We are a relatively small Regional Training Organisation (RTO) and our funded training places have reduced by a little under 11% since 2016. It is extremely important that we halt/reverse this decline.

We need to be effective in our engagement with all stakeholders and input into their decision-making processes. Effective stakeholder engagement for EV will improve our business planning and result in better-informed decision making and collaboration in projects, programs and services, assisting us to be omnipresent in Australia.

We have a broad spectrum of local and national stakeholders inclusive of Commonwealth and State governments, the two GP colleges, hospitals, health services, general practices, PHNs, registration and accreditation boards, representative agencies, universities and training hubs, Aboriginal health organisations, as well as the GPs, registrars, educators and the staff of our own organization. Any strategy must be inclusive and/or considerate of the views of those organizations and individuals.

We have numerous strengths and significant opportunities to build our influence. Effective stakeholder engagement can effectively position us as a pre-eminent training provider. It is the purpose of this document to build upon our past and current success by depicting future strategies to improve our performance thereby improving organizational standing.

Objective

To be recognized as a pre-eminent leader in the training of future general practitioners whilst supporting our communities with quality healthcare provision. We aspire to be regarded as a benchmark for other RTOs and to be influential in policy formation and implementation concerning the future direction of general practice training in Australia.

Background

We effectively manage 388 GPs in training across 206 practices supported by 482 accredited supervisors throughout our region (as at August 2019).

We are currently the third smallest RTO by number of training places. Since 2016, our funded training places have reduced by just under 11% due to workforce need determination. We are intent on growing this number in consideration of the needs of our region.

EV's Training Allocation 2016-2020

	General Pathway	Rural Pathway	Total Number Training Places
2016	87	42	129
2017	87	35	122
2018	83	35	118
2019	80	36	116
2020	80	35	115

Our current situation

Strengths

Our key strengths are our excellent reputation, our standing in the sector, our capacity to engage applicants and deliver our quality of training and education. These strengths are identified in satisfaction surveys, pass rates and enrolments. Examples include the 2020 selection campaign for 2021 AGPT entry where we achieved an excellent application rate for entry into GP training for 2021 across both rural and general pathways and in surveys undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Health and General Practice Supervisors Australia (GPSA) where we were rated highly by supervisors and registrars.

We have strong and constructive relationships with both GP Colleges and Government Health Departments and rural hospital and health networks, and rural clinical schools. Our rural pipeline is supported by collaborative programs with Department of Health, our practices, regional health services, Gippsland Training Hub and Post Graduate Medical Council (PMCV) aimed at students and junior doctors. We also have productive dialogues with both GPSA and General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA).

We continue to support the work of the national Cultural Mentor-Cultural Educator (CECM) network. The Network has an MOU with the Department of Health (DOH) and with the Regional Training Organisation Network (RTON) which ensures these groups work together to 'communicate key messages and recommendations on behalf of the CECM Network.

Our performance is underpinned by our staff who are experienced, highly skilled and engaged. Many of our staff have been with us since 2016, and a large percentage worked with previous RTOs in the region. Our organizational knowledge in the sector is amongst the highest nationally.

Weaknesses

The GP Training industry is a multi-faceted and complex one. A mix of governing bodies creates a dynamic environment and one that is largely outside of our control.

Relationships with organizations involved in GP pipelines need to be strengthened and better engagement with PHNs needs to occur. We need to establish stronger relationships with metropolitan hospitals and Universities in our urban footprint, much in the way we have in Gippsland.

Our relationship with the Victorian Community Controlled Health Organisation needs to be strengthened to enable meaningful and measurable contributions towards Closing the Gap. We will explore engagement opportunities with the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health faculty to gain a better understanding of the work they are doing with their members to ensure consistent messaging with practices. We will similarly seek further engagement opportunities in this area with ACRRM.

On a national platform we have largely failed to publicize our sizeable achievements and leadership.

Opportunities

We need to better inform our stakeholders about our purpose, capability and achievements. Our work centers on supporting doctors in training to achieve optimal outcomes thereby delivering quality healthcare to the communities they serve throughout our region. We positively impact upon our geographic footprint and it is paramount that others know and appreciate that contribution.

It is important for sustainability to proactively explore future GP pipelines and collaborate with hospital and health services, Universities and relevant governing bodies.

PHNs are actively engaged with training practices in our region and through engagement we can explore and identify synergies. Similarly with our work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, partnering with PHNs may result in efficiencies in planning, service delivery and potentially reducing duplication of effort.

Threats

The principal threat to our business is the impending transition to College-led training. We remain confident of our capability to secure an ongoing contract to deliver AGPT however we remain alert as to the potential change in operations and the effect(s) this may represent to our region. We continue to work hard in this area to ensure ongoing sustainability of our program and support to our region.

Rural general practice has and continues to experience less than appropriate workforce recruitment, retention and distribution through AGPT. We have so far managed to resist this trend through targeted marketing campaigns and the strength of our offering. However we must continue to mitigate this trend and continue to improve practitioner numbers.

We have experienced reduced levels of engagement with Department of Health due to internal changes. We have diminished capacity to discuss AH matters with key AHT members as established channels of communication have been disrupted.

Critical to our success

In reviewing our current situation and our industry dynamics, the following factors have been identified as critical to our success.

- the depth and quality of relationships with our key stakeholders including key industry groups
- improved standing both within Victoria and nationally
- engagement with our stakeholders via multiple delivery modes
- improved understanding and delivery alignment with what stakeholders value
- adequate funding allocation
- relevance to future training models
- capacity to immediately react to context change i.e. COVID-19, complementary and paralleled programs, jurisdiction changes etc.

Engagement and Influencing Strategies

Our strategies are designed to elevate our profile in the general practice training sector amongst key stakeholders and focus on sharing our story, our successes, showcasing our achievements and our people to demonstrate our leadership and importance to delivery of GP training.

A major focus will be to emphasize our purpose - our work centers on supporting doctors in training to achieve optimal outcomes thereby delivering quality healthcare to the communities they serve throughout our region. This leads to better health outcomes for all.

Our program will include media releases, social media and face to face meetings with key stakeholders.

Connect more effectively with stakeholders

Improving the quality of our engagement with stakeholders is important to ensure we achieve our objective. We want to connect in a better and more targeted way.

The quality of our engagement relies on being mindful of “right person, right message, right time”. To this end, we will ensure engagement activities are matched appropriately to stakeholder type and offer diverse, relevant and value-added content that showcases our story.

We will review the way we deliver and our stakeholder communication schedule.

Our key stakeholders will be formally engaged at various stages to determine their view of our performance, what we are doing well and areas we can improve.

Take a more prominent role in the sector

Building on the strength of our existing relationships and industry knowledge, our senior managers will seek to have a seat at the table with key stakeholders on matters relating to policy, program model development, funding and GP pipeline development.

A GP Pipeline Working Group will be established building on the knowledge of key staff who will initiate discussion and meetings with hospital and health sector bodies.

Opportunities with PHNs and Universities in our footprint and other key organisations such as VACCHO, will be explored to identify areas of mutual benefit.

We are committed to our region and to expanding partnership relationships with our regional stakeholders.

Broadcast our success

A major focus will be telling ‘our story’. At the heart of what we do is supporting doctors in training to achieve optimal outcomes thereby delivering quality healthcare to the communities they serve throughout our region. We will focus our efforts on promoting and strengthening our brand and

leveraging our successes, our expertise, our track-record, our engagement with our communities and our relationships with key industry groups.

Our current communication with stakeholders has been based on the annual training activity cycle and current industry activity. This will be enhanced and a formal schedule developed.

Strengthen modes of delivery

Current communication vehicles include twice yearly EV newsletter, quarterly program updates, Annual Report – printed and digital – EV website news and our Reconciliation Action Plan. We will implement regular media releases and build our CRM with key stakeholders so our message reaches a wider audience. Face to face meetings (post COVID) will be more regular and purposeful.

Timeframe

The timeframe to implement this plan is the next 12-18 months. The next funding contracts will most likely be signed in June 2021.

Mid-May – early June 2020	Formulation of plan
Mid-June	Commence Plan

Resources

- Additional resources have been identified in Communications and Marketing.
- Funds have been allocated as a result of a recast of the 2020 Budget.

Limitations

Time – building a brand is something that occurs over time and as a result of engagement. Fortunately our brand is relatively well known and well regarded so we are starting from a position of strength.