



The NZMA's Doctors-in-Training Council recently held its last meeting of the year, and new council member Jesse Gale reports on some of the ideas discussed:

The Medical Training Board is proposing changes to doctor training next year, and now is the time for us to feed back on their ideas. It seems everyone finally agrees there's a shortage of New Zealand-trained doctors in New Zealand, so they are proposing a big increase in medical school places. That seems a fairly straightforward idea, though it will be a challenge for the Universities and later for hospitals and other trainers to absorb the bulge of trainees.

Secondly, the impression is that training could be improved for doctors in those transition years between getting registration and starting registrar training. If training was better in those years, it's suggested that you could get happier, more satisfied and competent house officers, better prepared for registrar training, and maybe this would happen in a shorter time. That sounds like a noble goal, but doctors training in Britain were disillusioned by some of the inflexible and bureaucratic changes in Modernising Medical Careers. So I approach their proposals with cautious optimism. It is critical that even the most junior of doctors are respected as autonomous people with families and outside lives, and not a resource to be distributed wherever we are required. If there is to be a more formal curriculum for the early postgraduate years, it must not introduce irrelevant hoops to jump through.

The other new governmental committee in our scene is the Director General's commission on RMO workforce issues. It is looking at what numbers and types of doctors are required for our health system into the future and what roles RMOs should have in delivering those services. I have trouble untangling just what changes they might have in mind. I think the implication is that there might be a better mixture of service roles for RMOs that might reduce the demand for our services, and improve retention by improving our job satisfaction. This would help to reduce the stressful and dangerous workforce shortages we face.

We're preparing submissions to both groups, and would welcome feedback, ideas or questions: please email [ditc@nzma.org.nz](mailto:ditc@nzma.org.nz)

Jesse Gale, a new DITC member

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