*To complete this form please edit the text in red. If possible, please also change the text in orange to your own words - this makes a big difference to whether your message will be heard! Don’t forget to change any red/orange text to black before you send, and fill out this* [*form*](https://docs.google.com/a/wamss.org.au/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUpA9pvEs5PlO9--NROTJdSEwPp1cvPxqx1wp2zTBRkqMVeA/viewform) *when you’ve sent it. Printing and sending in the post is the most powerful approach, but you can use email. Thank you.*

The Hon xxx

Xxx (Premier, Minister for Transport, Treasurer, etc)

Xxx (address)

*Click* [*here*](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members) *for your local MP’s contact details*

[xx xxx xxxx - date]

Dear xxxx,

**Re: UWA International Medical Student Internships**

I am writing to you today as a constituent of xxxx, to express my disappointment to hear that several medical graduates from UWA have not secured an internship for 2017. Without obtaining and completing an internship a medical graduate is unable gain full registration to practice as a doctor in Australia. An internship completes their medical education and without it, they are effectively unemployable.

Since 2000 the number of medical graduates in Australia has more than doubled, rising from 1,660 in 2000, to 3,484 in 2014. Despite this increase, WA medical graduates have always been able to secure medical internships, however this year, we have failed. Due to larger graduate cohorts from both Western Australian universities, and a decrease in the allocation of Commonwealth Medical Internships to Western Australia, nine UWA medical graduates are yet to secure an internship. Nine graduates who are dedicated to the Australian healthcare system, who are determined to help their local community, and to make a lasting contribution here in Australia, their home.

**There are five concerns with local international students not securing an internship:**

1. Our investment in medical student education is lost when students are unable to complete their qualification in Australia.

The State and Commonwealth Governments have invested a significant amount into training each medical graduate through a six year degree. When students are forced to leave the country, we lose this investment. Furthermore medical students are allowed to interact with sick patients during training because we have the reasonable expectation of them being employed as doctors. This would no longer apply to international students, which creates an ethical problem.

2. We need continued revenue from international students to support our university and the standard of medical teaching. This revenue will rapidly decrease if these students do not receive internships.

Higher education is Australia’s third biggest export industry and state economies are increasingly reliant on international student revenues. These students pay tuition fees of roughly $300,000. For a number of years there have been concerns expressed that there would be a fall in International student numbers and associated revenue (both to the University and the broader economy) if their prospect of securing an internship was not guaranteed.

3. We need to retain as many Australian-trained doctors as possible to adequately care for our community.

Health Workforce Australia’s workforce modelling indicates that in order to sustainably meet our future health needs, our health systems must increase the number of doctors in particular specialties and locations. There is a well-known trend of hiring a large number of foreign-qualified doctors mid-way through each year. This is extremely difficult to comprehend or justify given that we will be sending home locally educated doctors only six months prior.

4. We have an ethical responsibility to provide the final year of training to international students.

There is a historical precedent of international students being offered internships in Western Australia at the conclusion of their degree. They have chosen our State and dedicated themselves to it, both within their studies and within the wider community. There is a reasonable expectation (not disputed by the University at the commencement of their degree) that WA will not simply provide them with a medical degree, but with a medical license to practice. This requires a final year of investment that rests solely with the government rather than the university.

5. We need to protect our future.

The establishment of Curtin Medical School and approval to graduate doctors from 2021 onwards will only worsen this issue in future years.With our health system already struggling to provide adequate internships as evidenced this year, this problem will only grow as local Curtin graduates prevent further international students from securing an internship.

It is now clear that further action is urgently needed. I urge you to campaign for swift mobilisation of funding to rectify the current internship shortage, and ensure an internship for every medical graduate in Western Australia this year and in following years.

As a Member of Parliament you advocate for our health system, its’ champions and the community of Western Australia. Please help us to provide the opportunity for our graduates to complete this necessary year of their long training and enable them to contribute meaningfully to our health system as they have been planning to since at least 2011.

With kind regards,

(Constituent signature)

(Constituent name)

(Constituent address)