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MEDIA ALERT

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Issued:

New research delves into Australia's ongoing medical workforce shortages

A five-year longitudinal survey awarded to the Melbourne Institute will allow researchers to understand how the changing balance between work and life for Australia's doctors is influencing medical workforce shortages.

The research entitled '*Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL): The Australian Longitudinal Survey of Doctors*' was awarded by the National Health and Medical Research Council to a team of experts from the University of Melbourne and Monash University. The research will be led by Professor Anthony Scott, head of the Health Economics area at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne.

The research will examine the changing patterns of doctors' work over time to better understand doctor shortages and surpluses, and their pivotal role in the health care system. Changes in family circumstances, job satisfaction, earnings and the nature of work itself, will be examined in order to determine the most effective policy responses to maintaining the size, motivation and productivity of the medical workforce.

"Changes in skill mix and recruitment into deprived, remote and rural areas will continue to be key areas of policy debate and development which will require a strong and rigorous evidence base", said Professor Scott.

Up to 5,500 doctors will be asked to participate, with the first wave of the survey expected to be in Autumn 2008. The grant will provide the team with \$2.1 million in funding over five years to conduct this research.

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