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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



General practitioners participate in National Pain Summit on 11 March 2010 in Canberra

Concerns about the alarming number of Australians suffering from persisting pain during their lifetime underpins the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP) participation at the National Pain Summit, which will be held in Canberra at Parliament House on 11 March 2010.

One in five Australians suffer from persisting pain during their lifetime, yet up to 80 percent are missing out on treatment that could improve their health and quality of life. An Access Economics report from 2007 has shown that long term pain costs the Australian economy over \$34.3 billion a year.¹ In addition, more than 36 million working days are lost each year due to painful conditions. At the National Pain Summit, the RACGP will help finalising a national strategy to address this pressing economic and social issue.

Associate Professor Ron Tomlins, Chair of the RACGP's Quality Care Committee, said that general practitioners understand the problems associated with persisting pain as they are at the forefront of dealing with patients suffering from persistent pain. "The number of patients with pain and the impact on their lives, the long waiting times for people suffering pain to access pain management clinics (in some cases up to two years), and the scarcity of trained allied health professionals in the community are big challenges for our health system."

"More needs to be done – now," said Associate Professor Tomlins.

The National Pain Summit draws attention to the need for action to improve pain management services. Associate Professor Ron Tomlins will represent the RACGP at the Summit and Dr Stephen Leow, Chair of the RACGP National Network of Pain Management, will also attend as the RACGP Adviser on education and training in pain management.

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Notes to the editors – About the National Pain Summit & Strategy

The National Pain Summit, to be held on Thursday 11 March 2010 at Parliament House in Canberra, will bring together Australia's leading authorities in pain medicine, other health professionals and consumer groups representing people with pain to finalise a national strategy to address this pressing economic and social issue. The strategy will be aligned to Federal Government initiatives for health reform, particularly in relation to preventative health and the management of chronic disease.

An initial National Pain Strategy draft was launched on 18 October 2009 and is continually being updated. Expert and community feedback on the strategy has been sought and the strategy will be finalised at the National Pain Summit.

For more information, visit www.painsummit.org.au.

Media contacts

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) sets and maintains the standards for quality clinical practice, education and training, and research in Australian general practice, and represents Australia's urban and rural general practitioners. Visit www.racgp.org.au.

¹ The Access Economics report 'The high price of pain: the economic impact of persistent pain in Australia', November 2007, is available at www.accesseconomics.com.au/publicationsreports/showreport.php?id=142&searchfor=Economic%20Con