

UP FRONT

OVERCOMING MEDICO LIMBO

A parliamentary report has made 45 recommendations to improve the registration and support processes for overseas trained doctors, following a 14-month inquiry into the issue.

Key recommendations in the *Lost in the labyrinth* report include reviewing the requirement for overseas trained doctors to spend 10 years working in a district of workforce shortage and extending the validity of English language tests from two to four years in some cases.

House of Representatives Health Committee Chair Steve Georganas (Hindmarsh, SA) said the report is aimed at cutting unnecessary red tape

in the process while ensuring that Australia's high clinical standards are maintained.

"One example was an overseas trained specialist who told us he was forced to sit a basic exam again only to find he was the author of the prescribed textbook," Mr Georganas said.

"We need good doctors to be able to get on with the job they came here to do — not stuck doing paperwork for months on end."

To read the report visit www.aph.gov.au/haa and for more information email haa.reps@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4145.



GETTY IMAGES

ON WITH THE JOB: Overseas doctors report wants red tape cut



BETTER CONNECTION: Linking the community with parliament

PARLIAMENT LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Australian parliament has a new website at www.aph.gov.au providing improved access to information about the parliament, members and senators, legislation and the work of committees.

The aim of the new website is to support democratic participation by making it easier to find information about and communicate with the parliament, its members and committees.

The website provides plenty of vision with live webcasts of parliamentary sittings and committee hearings along with virtual tours of the building. Recent recordings of Question Time in the House of Representatives can be found on the About the House news page at www.aph.gov.au/ath along with the latest video clips from the

About the House and MPI television programs.

Online versions of the About the House magazine can be found at www.aph.gov.au/athmag and there is also a new web page at www.aph.gov.au/international outlining the parliament's international connections, parliamentary strengthening programs, incoming and outgoing delegations and reports on these overseas visits.



ACQUISITION: Bernard Wright (r) receives historic document from Geoffrey Lindell

HISTORY HANDOVER

The House of Representatives has been given a rare draft constitution from 1898. Professor Geoffrey Lindell, who was given this bound predecessor to the current Constitution by a former member of parliament Ralph Jacobi (Hawker, SA), presented it to the

Clerk of the House of Representatives Bernard Wright. This 1898 draft constitution was the culmination of the work done during the second convention of delegates from Australia's six colonies.

"It is in large measure the same document that finally became the Constitution," Professor Lindell said. "In substance it is the work of the convention and the work of the Australian people, but in form it is a document that had to be passed by the British parliament itself."

Mr Wright welcomed the historic acquisition. "It's almost exactly the Constitution that we know today," he said. "The department has not had an original document of this kind so it's a greatly appreciated gesture by Professor Lindell to pass this onto the department where it will be treasured."

NAME CHANGE FOR SECOND CHAMBER

The Main Committee of the House of Representatives has been renamed the Federation Chamber.

The Federation Chamber acts as a secondary place of debate where bills can be referred for further discussion without taking up the limited time of the House itself. Members also make constituency statements and discuss committee reports there.