

# Peer mentoring scheme's future far from clear

**Pamela Wilson**

THE FUTURE of the RACGP peer mentor network remains uncertain, with funding for the pilot program due to run out at the end of next month.

Under the program, which began last year, 64 mentors – all of whom are IMGs – are matched with an IMG protégé to deliver up to 10 hours of guidance.

“It’s run by people who have been through the hurdles themselves, so they understand,” said Wagga Wagga GP and IMG mentor Dr Ayman Shenouda.

In its 2010-2011 budget submission, the RACGP has called for project funding to be continued, and expanded next financial year.

“We will apply for funding again. It’s a fantastic program,” Dr Shenouda said.

But Dr Kim Webber (PhD), head of the Rural Health Workforce Agency, which administers Federal Government-funded fellowship support programs, was not convinced of the RACGP scheme’s success.

“The mentor program is something we found out about only after it had been running for a while,”



Dr Webber said. “It probably would have been good to ask what kind of mentorship and support [IMGs] actually want.

“I’m not sure if it’s having any

impact.” Dr Webber added that the fellowship support program funded by the Federal Government achieved consistently good outcomes because it was tailored to each doctor.