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Mr Shaun Drummond
Acting Director-General
Queensland Health

By email: dg_correspondence@health.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Drummond

As the peak representative body for doctors, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland has actively campaigned for the improved health and wellbeing of doctors. Campaigns such as '[We are medicine and we are human](#)' and '[Self-Care September](#)' have emphasised the impact medicine as a career has on the mental health of our practitioners. Recently Queensland Health posted a meme on its Instagram page, labelling burnout the responsibility of the individual. The Queensland Health meme was not only insensitive and disrespectful but a blatant disregard for the collective action to address burnout and mental health issues within our profession.

The widely cited Beyond Blue [National Mental Health Survey of Doctors and Medical Students](#) found doctors had higher rates of suicidal ideation and psychological distress than the Australian population. This has only deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with rates of distress found to be higher than baseline amongst doctors. Several studies have found the working environment and long hours to be significant factors affecting the mental wellbeing of doctors and medical students. While media outlets highlight improvements in public mental health awareness, the mental health stigma experienced by medical professionals prevents those suffering, from seeking help and accessing life-saving support.

While AMA Queensland acknowledges Queensland Health has removed the Instagram post, we believe the medical workforce need to know their mental health and wellbeing is valued and supported. We recognise the post was intended to be humorous but it was disrespectful to genuine trauma, burnout and distress felt in the medical workforce. We are seeking a public apology from Queensland Health, recognising the impact medicine as a profession has on the health and wellbeing of its workforce. We ask that Queensland Health disseminate this apology to its medical staff, emphasising the role of the workplace and employer in preventing and addressing mental health issues experienced by medical professionals. Information on where to find help and support must be included with this apology.

The AMA Queensland community has mourned the loss of too many colleagues who were battling mental health issues. We are committed to supporting doctors in their time of need and look forward to working with Queensland Health on continuing to improve the mental health of our medical workforce.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Perry'.

Prof Chris Perry
President
AMA Queensland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brett Dale'.

Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Nayer'.

Dr Robert Nayer
Chair, Committee of Doctors in Training
AMA Queensland