

MEDIA RELEASE

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AMA recognises Dr Amireh Fakhouri for standing-up for doctors in training

The Australian Medical Association's Doctor in Training of the Year Award has recognised Dr Amireh Fakhouri for taking a courageous and principled stand for fairness and the rights of doctors in training.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said Dr Fakhouri had been involved in a groundbreaking legal case that highlighted systemic underpayment of doctors in training and the need for reforms in the healthcare sector.

Dr Fakhouri, who received the award at the AMA24 Conference on the Gold Coast last night, is a GP registrar who took the lead in a class action against NSW Health, resulting in a record \$230m settlement to 20,000 junior doctors for underpayment of wages for overtime.

She was the lead plaintiff for the rights of junior doctors at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, where she worked from 2015–2018.

"Dr Fakhouri was quoted in the media earlier this year saying that it was never about the money but was about being treated fairly and ensuring the work of doctors in training was properly recognised and recompensed," Professor Robson said.

"She was selfless and showed enormous courage in standing-up for the rights of her colleagues, ignoring the potential cost to her own career.

"We owe Dr Fakhouri a debt of gratitude for taking a principled stand for the just treatment of doctors in training. This case serves as a warning that young doctors cannot continue to be forced to work long, and often unsafe, hours at a cost to their wellbeing and without being paid for their overtime."

Professor Robson also recognised the finalists in the AMA's Doctor in Training of the Year Award: Dr Elise Witter, Dr Emma Hodge and Dr Adrian Siu.

Dr Fakhouri emphasised that the action was not about money but about fair treatment and recognising the contributions of doctors in training in public hospitals.

"Hospitals depend on the goodwill and compassion of junior doctors to work without pay, which devalues our worth," Dr Fakhouri said.

"In other industries, people stand up for their rights and fight for what they are entitled to. Why should it be different in medicine? Being treated fairly encourages students to pursue a career in medicine."

Dr Fakhouri is an academic post registrar at the University of Melbourne and affiliate lecturer at Deakin University. She is an executive member of the Australian Islamic Medical Association and an AMA member.

The AMA campaigns to raise awareness about issues and challenges facing doctors in training in Australia.

Doctors in training are represented through the AMA Council of Doctors in Training (CDT), which represents AMA doctors in training on professional and workplace issues.

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