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**DOCTORS’ HEALTH CAMPAIGNER HONOURED FOR
 INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT**

AMA President’s Award
2019 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon
Sofitel Brisbane, 24-26 May 2019

A Melbourne cardiologist who singlehandedly started an international movement to encourage doctors to openly discuss their mental health struggles is the recipient of the 2019 AMA President’s Award.

Dr Geoff Toogood was presented with the award at the AMA National Conference in Brisbane tonight.

The President’s Award is given to a person who, in the opinion of the President, has made an outstanding contribution towards furthering the objectives of the AMA.

“Dr Toogood is a most worthy recipient on the basis of his demonstrated commitment to, and advocacy for, doctors’ health,” AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said.

“Geoff speaks from a lived experience, and is a passionate and authentic advocate for the medical profession.

“Geoff overcame significant mental health issues, with the support of his family, family GP, and other health providers.

“But on his return to work, he faced discrimination and unfounded speculation about the state of his mental health.

“As part of his recovery, he wore bright socks, and adopted a puppy. And, as anyone who has ever lived with a puppy knows, socks and pups are not a good mix.

“One day in 2016, his dog Sammy chewed one of his socks as he was on his way out the door to work.

“When Geoff grabbed another, non-matching sock and wore it to work, he became aware that his colleagues were laughing at him behind his back and whispering that he was ‘going crazy again’.

“A simple question or chat would have cleared up the matter.

“Geoff decided it was time to break down the stigma and get people talking about mental illness in the medical profession.

“So he made the first Friday in June #CrazySocks4Docs day, and encouraged members of the health profession to share photos of their odd, crazy socks on social media.

“#CrazySocks4Docs is now a global phenomenon, with doctors around the world donning odd socks.

“Geoff’s message is that it is okay for doctors not to be okay, and that by talking openly about mental illness, depression, and anxiety, we can empower our colleagues to seek help, or offer assistance.

“A *beyondblue* survey of 14,000 Australian doctors and medical students in 2013 found that they are burnt-out, more likely to experience psychological distress and suicidal thoughts than the general community, and are drinking too much alcohol.

“We have lost too many of our colleagues in recent years to ignore our own health.

“Dr Geoff Toogood has led the way in raising awareness around the world of the need to support each other and talk openly about mental health.

“I commend him for his work, and am proud to present him with this Award.”

25 May 2019

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AMA PRESIDENT'S AWARD FULL CITATION

DR GEOFFREY TOOGOOD

MBBS, FRACP, FCANZ, FHRS, AFRACMA, A/FACAsM, Grad Cert HSM, ACCAM

Dr Geoffrey Toogood is a champion for doctors' health and, in particular, doctors' mental health. He speaks from a lived experience and is a passionate and authentic advocate for the profession.

Dr Toogood had significant mental health problems that he overcame with the support of his family, family GP, and other health providers around him. He was discriminated against in his workplace and found it difficult to get back to his normal duties - which he did despite the efforts of managers and some of his colleagues.

Following his recovery from his mental illness, Dr Toogood has striven to make his experience known and to minimise the chance of that experience happening to anyone ever again. He tweets extensively. He also writes and talks extensively on the topic.

Dr Toogood has been a dynamic force in turning up the volume of recognition and advocacy for doctors' health by mobilising huge numbers of doctors, their families, patients, and the wider health community with his innovative and very resonant #CrazySocks4Docs movement.

This idea came out of an episode, after he had recovered, when his dog Sammy chewed one of his socks as he was on his way out the door to work. When he grabbed another (non-matching) sock and wore it to work, he was targeted for perhaps being mentally unwell. The first #CrazySocks4Docs was very successful and has now become a major driver for change in the profession.

Dr Toogood is a tireless, noble and passionate advocate for his colleagues and patients, a skilled and highly respected clinician, and a very worthy candidate for the 2019 AMA President's Award.