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AMA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2018
CANDIDATE SPEECH – DR TONY BARTONE

2018 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon
QT Canberra, 25-27 May 2018

AMA National Conference 2018
Candidate Speech
Dr Tony Bartone
Sunday 27 May 2018

*****Check Against Delivery**

I want to share a story with you - a story from my childhood.

A story of my family doctor, who repeatedly came to our home to visit my very sick father, who had been confined to bed for weeks. My father thankfully recovered, and remained very active for 40 more years.

The dedication of my family GP inspired my calling to medicine. A calling to help those who needed health care.

The inspiration that motivated me to become a GP still drives me today.

But my goals have expanded.

I now want to fight for Australian doctors, so they can continue to provide the excellent, compassionate care that my father received.

Australians have a right to quality health care, and it is up to us - as the AMA - to defend our world class health system.

But our health system is ailing.

Public hospital waiting lists continue to blow out.

Private health insurance is becoming increasingly unaffordable for our patients.

The enormous bottlenecks in the training pipeline.

The continuing struggle for some doctors around their own health and wellbeing.

Variable access to care in country towns and rural areas.

General Practice has been systematically starved of funding - tearing at its heart; wearing it down; putting at risk its world class outcomes in primary care, its very survival.

Delegates - our Australian health system needs our AMA to drive the health policy agenda.

The AMA, under my leadership, has the solutions to these issues. Solutions such as:

- significant, targeted investment in general practice, rewarding patient centred care
- improved access to health care, through better funding of public hospitals, not only in the cities, but in rural and regional Australia, and closing The Gap for our indigenous population
- a national medical workforce strategy with quality flexible training solution, addressing workforce distribution issues
- resolving the impasse that is mandatory reporting, and
- supporting our colleagues who are experiencing mental health issues.

Colleagues, we need a strong AMA. We need to work with the State and Territory AMAs to ensure the value proposition we offer is consistent across the country; collaborating to increase efficiencies across the federation, especially improving our communication with them.

Our AMA needs to champion solutions for Australians.

I am ready to act on that call to drive the political health agenda - a call that began, watching my family GP all those years ago.

A GP President will send an urgent, powerful message at this critical time to the GP community that membership of the AMA is essential.

Our Health Minister needs to understand that the time for rhetoric is over. Our patience is wearing thin. We need to see crucial positive actions now.

Next year, Australians will elect a new Federal Government.

We have a narrow window of opportunity to further deeply engage with Government and achieve meaningful outcomes.

And I am ready for any early election call.

Colleagues, I will continue to listen and engage with members across our AMA, ensuring your voices are heard loudly in the corridors of Government.

I am ready to be your next President.

Serving our members - that is what the AMA is about. It has been my honour to serve our AMA, and now I look for your support to continue that service as your next Federal AMA President.

#Ends

27 May 2018

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