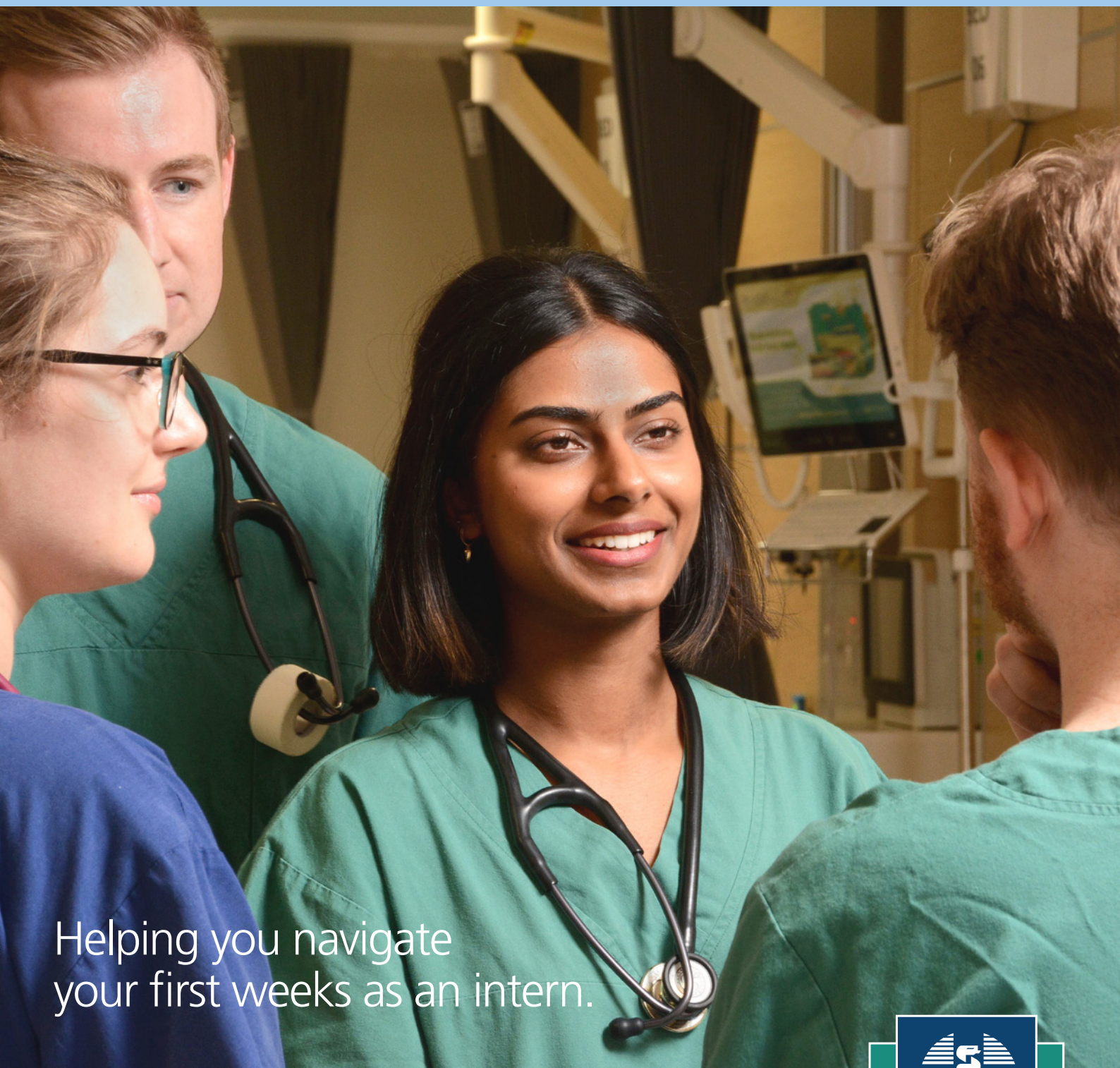


AMA(SA) Intern Guide 2020



Helping you navigate
your first weeks as an intern.

You're on your way!



Congratulations on becoming an intern. Reaching this point has required many years of dedication, discipline and hard work. You may have wondered why you'd dreamed of becoming a doctor, and even considered a different career plan. But now your hard work has paid off, and you're ready for the next step.

That's not to say the hard work is over. There are many challenges ahead – but unlike those you faced as a medical student, you can face these challenges knowing that your work will contribute to the health and wellbeing of patients.

Real people will be better off because you studied medicine and because you are responsible for their treatment and care.

There are challenges ahead. It's likely you'll find the only people who understand what you're going through are the people who've been there before, and those who are experiencing it with you now.

Talk to them, learn from them, and if nothing else you'll understand you're not alone.

And in saying that, we'd like to emphasise how important the AMA is in ensuring you really aren't alone.

In South Australia, the AMA(SA) is passionate about bringing together all of the state's doctors, providing a forum and a platform from which we doctors can focus on what unites us as we work together for the greater good of the medical profession, and all South Australians.

As an AMA(SA) member you can connect with colleagues across all medical fields, build your professional network, and be an active part of the conversation on issues that affect our profession.

We wish you the best of luck for an exciting, enthralling and extremely satisfying career.

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

Dr Chris Moy
President AMA(SA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Szewczyk'.

Dr Hannah Szewczyk
Chair, Doctors in Training
AMA(SA) Councillor

How to be a great intern

Be prepared

The simplest measure of professionalism is whether you turn up on time, ready to roll. Arrive before your team, touch base with the nursing staff about overnight patient issues, and finalise your patient list before the ward round is due to start.

Be a good communicator

In the busy-ness of the day, it's easy for messages to be miscommunicated and misunderstood. Remember to speak with respect, courtesy and clarity, and in a manner that reflects your audience.

Ensure you understand what is being said, and that you have been understood. Not all patients and their families understand medical terminology.

Trust yourself

Being a doctor is hard, and things don't always go to plan. But it is one of the most rewarding professions around. On the tough days, remind yourself why you decided to become a doctor.

Smile and take a selfie, so you have evidence you can turn to that there are great days among the ordinary ones.

Be an ambassador

You represent a profession steeped in tradition. Your hospital is a community, and your university, school and family and friends are the foundation that helped get you to this point. Make them proud!

Add value

Grab any opportunities to contribute to both your team and to patient care. Be a spare pair of hands whenever you can help, for patients, visitors and colleagues, and at all times be a team player.

Know your limitations

Never, ever, ever, ever (ever) pretend to know something you don't. Don't make anything up.

Don't hide a mistake, such as forgetting to ask a question or to chase results.

If a question needs an answer, find someone who can provide it; you're not expected to know it all.

If you make a mistake (and we all do), take responsibility for it and accept feedback gracefully. It's a positive step in becoming a better doctor.

Find a mentor

Find someone you respect and who has been around a bit to advise you challenge you, and keep you honest. Your mentor will help you reflect on your work, your goals, your life, and your progress, and help you become a better doctor.

Respect confidentiality

Don't ever discuss patients within the earshot of anyone who isn't involved in their care. You never know who's behind you in the coffee line or the lift, or who may be in the next cubicle.

Be careful what you post on social media. Don't gossip. Treat people the way you want to be treated – and always with professionalism and integrity.

Plan ahead

- Job applications for postgraduate year 2 (PGY2) are due in the middle of the year.
- Ask consultants for references while they still remember you.
- Update your CV – the AMA Career Advisory Service can help.
- Work out what you're aiming to achieve in the next three years and how to get there.

Maintain a balance

Eat well, keep fit, sleep, relax, make time for things you enjoy, and stay connected to family and friends. Take a holiday. Read a novel. Watch Netflix. Learn a language. Play a team sport.

Whatever you choose, make sure you have a life outside work. You won't always achieve 'work-life balance', but you should always make sure there is 'life' alongside the 'work'.

Golden rules

There are no 'rules' about how to best prepare for becoming an intern, but there are many people willing to help and offer guidance. The following tips combine the hints of many people who've been exactly where you are now – and survived.

The overall message is that you should look after yourself, because neither you nor any of your patients will benefit from you knocking yourself out with fatigue or stress, or the any number of things that you may consider to help you through.

Begin with you

Take care of yourself. Eat well. Rest. Exercise. Do things you enjoy, with the people who make you relax and laugh – ideally with some fresh air thrown in. If you're too sick to perform at close to 100 per cent, stay home.

Be the best doctor you can be. You've worked so hard and achieved so much to be here. Yes, there will be challenges and hard days, but you're not alone.

Keep copies of everything: your contracts of employment, overtime worked, leave applications and any complaints or unpleasant situations – and don't just store them at work. This is the beginning of a career in which keeping and filing important documents will be necessary for all sorts of reasons – including if you ask the AMA(SA) for help.

Check everything. Check your roster. Check that your payslips match your hours worked. Check that you've eaten and slept, and, if possible, give someone the job to check, too.

Take responsibility for your actions. That's integrity. If you didn't order a test or ask a question, admit it. Your patient's care is more important than your ego or embarrassment.

Be a team player

Help your peers. If you can swap a shift when asked, do it. You never know when you'll need someone to return the favour.

Help everyone. Healthcare is a team sport. Doctors are among the members of a team that includes nurses, other health practitioners, administrative staff and managers. You all help make the hospital function – do your bit to help others do theirs.

Ask for help. If you don't know something, ask – and keep asking until you find someone able to answer your question.

Respect your colleagues. Treat everyone as you'd want to be treated, regardless of how busy, tired and stressed you are. No task is beneath you. Be a human first, and doctor second. Be sensitive, caring and kind.

Remember, the AMA is your 'team'. The AMA is the only organisation that advocates for the medical profession as a whole, from students through to retired doctors.

Many doctors in training don't join professional organisations and so they can be fragmented and feel they're alone. There's strength and support in numbers!

On the job

Treat each patient as an individual and a person – not a collection of symptoms and certainly not as a body or a number.

When you're with a patient, talk to them first – not to a parent or carer. Talk to and care for every person as you'd want to be spoken to, or you'd want your mother/father/sister/brother/daughter/son/best friend spoken to and cared for.

Respect your knowledge and experience and speak up if something's on your mind. Don't let a problem fester. Talk to colleagues, your peers, the hospital administration or the AMA(SA). Your fellow doctors in training will help you through it.

Remember that you're a doctor – and how amazing that is. You can help people when they need it most. You have a job and a career that is challenging and stimulating. Many, many people want to be doctors and can't. You're one of the lucky ones!



THE NOT-SO-SECRET SEVEN TIPS FROM AMA(SA) PRESIDENT DR CHRIS MOY

- 1.** Competing demands will scramble your thoughts, but your No. 1 priority is and must be your patient.
- 2.** The patient in front of you is a unique person with a history, perspective and agenda unlike anyone else's – not a dilemma or a problem, and certainly not a number.
- 3.** Healthcare is a team sport. Develop good relationships with everyone around you to optimise your chances of success (see 1. above).
- 4.** Ask advice when you need it – if possible, before you need it.
- 5.** If you're having a bad day, chances are others are, too. Smile, be approachable, and explain if you're not able to help.
- 6.** Try and switch off when you leave the hospital. Imagine a line at the exit – once you cross it, breathe and assume your other identity.
- 7.** You're intelligent, disciplined and resilient – if you weren't, you wouldn't be here. Remember that, and trust yourself!

What to expect in year one

Graduating from medical school and starting your internship is one of the biggest transitions you will make in your professional life. Internship marks the beginning of your journey towards becoming an independent and capable medical practitioner.

On completing your medical degree, you receive provisional registration and enter the workforce as an intern or 'postgraduate year 1' (PGY1) doctor.

This part of your training is usually taken in a public hospital – although in coming years, more interns will be spending part of their training in general practice, community-based settings and private hospitals.

This is an important year that offers many opportunities to apply your theoretical knowledge in caring for patients. There are many aspects of it you'll enjoy, but it will also be challenging, tiring and hard.

Remember you're not alone. There are people going through it with you, and hundreds around you who've been through it before.

What year 1 looks like

The Medical Board of Australia (MBA) is responsible for the structure of your internship, which is set out in the Intern Registration Standard – Australia and New Zealand graduates upon completion of intern training.

As an intern, you'll undertake a series of work rotations to expose you to various clinical situations and environments. This helps you choose areas of interest and provides a grounding for later training.

You'll have to perform satisfactorily in the following 'terms':

- Eight weeks of emergency medical care
- 10 weeks of medicine
- 10 weeks of surgery
- 19 weeks of other approved areas, such as aged care, anaesthesia, general practice, palliative medicine, psychiatry, rehab medicine or surgery.

PGY1 is 47 weeks of full-time study. It can be done part-time, but must be completed within three years.

Assessment

You will be assessed in the middle and at the end of each term with an appropriate supervisor – usually a consultant or registrar you've worked with during that term.

You'll be assessed on factors including clinical knowledge, clinical skills, leadership, professionalism, and patient communication.

Each assessment form will be provided from your medical education unit. You must obtain a copy, complete it with your supervisor and return it on time.

The assessments ask you to self-evaluate your skill level on a scale of one to five, with three being satisfactory. Your supervisor will then assess you on the same skills and provide comments.

As with other documentation, you should keep copies of all assessment forms.

If you are assessed as being below the expected level, you may be asked to participate in remediation. Remediation will be tailored to your circumstances and agreed with your supervisors.

For more information go to the intern resources section on the Medical Board website, www.medicalboard.gov.au.



You've made it!

You're officially a doctor. All of your hard work has paid off. Now it's time to enjoy it. Starting out as an intern can be a little intimidating, but it's also exciting! There are so many great opportunities and experiences ahead of you.

This is the year where you can finally call yourself a doctor. Take pride in that, as you've worked hard for it.

Who knows, you might even get called on to help out when someone is unwell on a flight.

You'll be able to take those flights too, as you'll finally be earning some decent money.

Although you might not have as much time for getaways and down-time as you'd like, as you'll work long hours at times, the trade-off is your life will be so much richer from your time spent working with people.

Working with people is never boring. You'll be a part of people's lives during their happiest, saddest and weirdest moments. It's the happy and weird moments that make me think "I love my job", and the sad moments that often make me really connect with people.

You'll also form some amazing, life-long friendships this year. Your fellow interns are going through this exciting, and sometimes scary experience with you. They get it.

Support each other, debrief and share your successes and funny stories.

Although medical jobs and specialist training positions are getting more and more competitive, this is not the year to worry about bulking up your CV or burning yourself out by trying to do research on top of working long hours. All of that can wait.

Turn up to work and do your job well. Every day will hold new opportunities. Keep an eye out for them and take them. You'll learn so much.

Don't forget that this is still a year for learning. No one expects you to have all the knowledge and skills straight away.

This is the year where you can use the knowledge you have, but safely ask for help when you need it. No one is going to judge you. Learn as much as you can.

Being a doctor also opens up so many doors. It can be a stepping stone to research, charity work or even writing a book.

If advocacy is something you're interested in, the AMA(SA) is a place where you can have a voice, and also develop new skills. You are welcome to join the AMA(SA) Doctors in Training Committee too! Good luck this year – and enjoy it. You've got this!

Dr Hannah Szewczyk

Chair, AMA(SA) Doctors in Training Committee
Obstetrics & Gynaecology Registrar
DITChair@amasa.org.au

A cultural shift

The AMA(SA) is staging a summit in early 2020 to demonstrate to everyone – politicians, health administrators, senior doctors and others – that bullying must stop. Doctors must be respected and treated with dignity.

Initially announced by AMA(SA) President Dr Chris Moy during an appearance before the Parliamentary Committee examining issues in South Australian health workplaces, the summit on 29 February 2020 will 'draw a line in the sand' on bullying.

A report with recommendations for action will be submitted to Minister Wade after the summit.

Looking after you



When you're focused on helping others with their health, it can be hard to recognise and admit when you need some help yourself.

It's important to monitor your own 'vital signs' and be aware of any signals that indicate you're not at your best.

Make sure you eat well and often, and get enough sleep and other rest when and where you can.

Be aware of any indication that you or any of your colleagues may be over-tired, stressed or experiencing mental health problems.

If left untreated, stress and acute distress can lead to depression and anxiety disorders, severely impacting on your mental and physical health.

The good news is that the culture is changing. There is ever-increasing awareness in the health system and the broader community that doctors, like other professionals, should not work when over-tired, stressed or depressed.

The AMA, Doctors Health Australia and other organisations have lobbied long and hard to eliminate any remnants of a culture in which young doctors were expected to work through and despite excessive fatigue, stress and discrimination.

People like Dr Geoff Toogood are leading the campaign to ensure doctors don't endanger themselves or their patients by working while affected by mental health issues.



If you need help

A national website launched in December 2019 provides advice and referral services to support doctors' and medical students' health and wellbeing.

The DRS4DRS website outlines independent, safe, supportive and confidential services and programs operating 24/7 across Australia.

www.drs4drs.com.au

AMA(SA) www.amasa.org.au 8361 0101

Doctors' Health SA www.doctorshealthsa.com.au
8232 1250

R U OK? www.ruok.org.au

Lifeline 13 11 14

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

TESSA'S TIPS

1. You're not alone
2. When and where to get help
3. Your rights (the AMA(SA) and DiT Committee can help!)
4. Your limits
5. Your support and safety nets
6. It's OK not to have a 10-year plan
7. There is no wasted experience
8. Things can change – but your decisions should drive it
9. Eat, sleep and exercise before saving lives (and you'll be better at it)
10. Our job is amazing!

Dr Tessa Kennedy
Chair, AMA Council of Doctors in Training

Thanks to AMA(SA) President Dr Chris Moy, interns Dr Mekha John and Dr Brendan May and RMOs Dr Brian Gue and Dr Megan Meredith for making themselves available for photography and to Brett Sheridan of Blue Razoo for the images. Thanks also to Dr Tessa Kennedy, Dr Hannah Szweczyk and our interstate AMA colleagues for help with the content. AMA(SA) 2020

The AMA and you

The AMA is the peak membership organisation for doctors in Australia.

We represent the medical profession in discussions and debate with government, policy makers, other health and community organisations and the media.

The AMA's input and advocacy are important ingredients in ensuring Australians have access to quality health care, when and where they need it.

It's important for giving doctors a strong, united voice in debate about the legislation, policy, funding and services that our patients and communities need.

And – largely because of the credibility we've built over many decades in fighting for our patients and a better health system – it's important when we want to explain issues that directly affect our members.

Those members are like you. They're students, interns, registrars and experienced doctors; they're at university, or working in hospitals or private practices in cities, towns and remote areas of South Australia.

And, like you, they work better knowing they are part of a team, among people who understand the highs and lows of our profession.

The AMA can be a source of information, guidance, comfort and support – or all four, and more.

Trust me, I'm a doctor!

Studies have found that Australians trust their doctors more than they trust any other professionals.

That trust comes from consultations between people, their doctors and their families. It also comes from Australians knowing what doctors do and what they stand for. That's because of the AMA.

The AMA(SA) is here for all South Australian doctors, doctors in training and student doctors.

As part of the community, you can draw on the network that is ready and able to influence politicians, academics, the media and communities.

And when you're ready, you can join your peers in expressing your ideas to improve our profession and the health care of all Australians.

Our advocacy

The capacity of the AMA(SA) to make a difference relies on it representing South Australian doctors – and on being seen and heard as the voice of the medical profession in this state.

In recent months, the AMA nationally and AMA(SA) have:

- declared climate change a global health emergency
- announced a 'bullying summit' to stop bullying in South Australia's health workplaces
- helped draft new legislation to decriminalise abortion
- called for more funding for mental health services
- helped people understand and use Advance Care Directives.

The AMA(SA) develops submissions to explain the informed thinking behind public and private campaigns to improve health conditions for South Australians.

Regular meetings with the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and other politicians and health policy makers ensure the South Australian Government understands what we say and why we say it.

Dr Moy is often asked to comment on news items. In one recent four-week period he was asked to provide media comment 11 times – and that's in addition to the regular segments on ABC Radio.

Join the conversation



The AMA(SA) is passionate about bringing together all South Australia's doctors, focussing on what unites us as we work together for the greater good of the medical profession, and all South Australians.

As an AMA(SA) member you have the opportunity to connect with colleagues across all medical professions, build your professional network, and be an active part of the conversation on issues that affect the medical profession.

All doctors, all specialties

Whether you are a medical student, starting out in your career, establishing your own practice, working in a large hospital or remote community, we are here to support you every step of the way.

As an AMA(SA) member you have access to a range of free and discounted resources and services to support you, plus professional development opportunities, and advice on workplace and career matters.

Additional member benefits

- Free subscription to Medical Journal of Australia (save more than \$400 a year)
- Free access to the AMA List of Medical Services and Fees (save \$499), and discounted resources including Desktop Practice Support Toolkit for GPs
- Discounted services from Hood Sweeney and Norman Waterhouse Lawyers
- Opportunities to save thousands through corporate programs with Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and BMW
- Save more than \$100 on Qantas Club and Virgin Lounge memberships
- 10% discount with Budget and Hertz
- 10% discount on purchases through the MJA Bookshop
- 10% discount on all products from Mentone Educational Supplies
- Free networking events, educational seminars and professional development sessions
- Discounted accredited training with our AMA Skills Training team
- Free use of the doctorportal Learning CPD Tracker
- Free access to AMA's Careers Advice Hub.

To join the AMA(SA) or find out more, contact Member Services Manager, **Rebecca Hayward** at membership@amasa.org.au or on 08 8361 0108. www.members.amasa.org.au/join

Congratulations on your graduation!

Starting your medical career is a momentous and exciting step. Don't put it all at risk.

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- *Free legal advice to help you through unfamiliar situations*
- *Risk management education*



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