

## AMACDT Meeting 15-16 July 2017.

### AMA House, Barton, ACT.

### Summary and outcomes.

The AMA Council of Doctors in Training met at AMA House in Canberra on 15-16 July 2017. The meeting was attended by more than 20 AMA doctor in training members and trainee committee representatives and included the Federal AMA President, Vice President and Secretary General. The meeting provided an opportunity for doctors in training from across the country to discuss current and emerging issues in medical education and training.

#### **Doctors' Health and wellbeing**

AMACDT had a 2 hour session to discuss progress towards improving doctors' health and wellbeing, and was joined by representatives from the Doctors' Health Service (DrHS) Board and beyondblue to inform this conversation. AMACDT noted Dr Michael Bonning had been re-elected as the DiT representative to the Board for a further 12 month term in recognition of his experience and contribution to the Board, and the importance of continuity of appointment at this early stage. The meeting discussed the outcomes of the 2017 AMA National Conference policy session on doctors' health and wellbeing led by AMACDT, and noted the Health Minister's announcement that the Government would invest in mental health programs for doctors. The AMA is part of the Caring for those who care: Preventing anxiety, depression and suicidal behaviour among Australia's medical workforce steering committee that has come together to discuss how best to address the mental health needs of those who provide care in our health services, and more specifically medical practitioners and medical students. The AMA was pleased to advise of support for a best practice framework/standard to support the psychological health and safety of doctors and will continue to work to develop such a standard.

#### **Changes to mandatory reporting**

The meeting also supported urgent modification to the legislation governing national registration of medical practitioners and students such that mandatory reporting provisions no longer apply in any state to healthcare professionals when treating other healthcare professionals or students. To this end the meeting noted that the Government announced in late June that it would make changes to the mandatory reporting laws, including consideration of the model adopted by Western Australia which provides exemptions for medical professionals who treat doctors seeking help for mental health issues.

## **Launch of 2016 AMA Safe Hours Audit Report**

The Report of the 2016 AMA Safe Hours Audit was launched on 15 July 2017 at the meeting of AMACDT. In summary the 2016 Audit confirmed that doctors at higher risk of fatigue and impaired performance typically work longer hours, longer shifts, have more days on call, less days off and are more likely to skip a meal break. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

## **After-hours deputising services**

AMACDT discussed after-hours services and the pressure on doctors in training to bill urgent MBS item numbers, leaving them exposed to allegation of inappropriate Medicare billing. AMACDT felt that the AMAs submission to the MBS review adequately encapsulated its concerns regarding doctors in training, whilst supporting appropriately trained doctors in training to work in these services.

## **The MRBS scheme**

At its meeting Council had a lengthy discussion about the current restrictions associated with the Medical Rural Bonded Scholar (MRBS) scheme. Council questioned the capacity of existing contracts to meet the needs of MRBS doctors in the current work and training environment, noting the landscape had changed significantly from when those contracts were first entered into. AMACDT discussed ways to improve the conditions for existing MRBS scheme doctors including removal of the Medicare Ban and will discuss this further with the Minister for Health.

## **Other advocacy and policy**

Other important policy areas progressed by AMACDT included:

- The feasibility of a national hospital health check to measure how well public hospitals are meeting the conditions outlined in doctor in training industrial agreements.
- An update from the Medical Board of Australia on progress towards a national training survey.
- Preventing and resolving training disputes.
- A commitment to review the existing Guide to social media and the medical profession.

The next meeting of AMACDT will be held on 28-29 October 2017 in Canberra.

Dr John Zorbas, Chair, AMA Council of Doctors in Training

31 July 2017