

PRACTICE GROUP UPDATES



General Practice

Chair: Dr Mary-Therese Wyatt | Meeting 10 June

Diphtheria outbreak: Public health messaging remains appropriate. Important to continue promoting vaccination and that it reduces the severity of illness, even where it doesn't prevent bacterial infection.

State committees GP representation: Renewed calls for fair reimbursement for representatives contributing their time and expertise. The AMA (WA) will continue advocating.

SAT reports reimbursement: Advocacy continues for payment for medical practitioners completing SAT reports. The Attorney General has instructed the Department of Justice to investigate this matter.

Hospital Liaison GPs (HLGP): Concerns about the future of the HLGP program. It plays a vital role in strengthening communication between hospitals and general practice, and supports continued advocacy for permanent funding, improved employment conditions, and greater consistency across health services.

Supporting post-hospital GP care: Proposal considered for a State-funded payment to help general practices provide timely follow-up appointments after hospital discharge – aiming to recognise the administrative and clinical effort in accommodating urgent appointments while improving continuity of care and reducing avoidable hospital readmissions.

Bulk-billing consent: Practical challenges from new Medicare consent requirements. Additional administrative burden on practices, particularly aged-care settings where obtaining documented consent may be difficult. Need for practical guidance, transitional arrangements, and ongoing advocacy.

GP supervisor remuneration: Increasing responsibilities of GP supervisors, with members noting remuneration hasn't kept pace with growing complexity of the role. Continued advocacy needed, particularly for those supervising IMGs and part-time registrars.

GP engagement: Opportunities discussed to strengthen GP engagement with the AMA (WA) – encouraging committee participation, leadership positions, and advocacy activities. Important to broaden engagement with IMGs, and ensure GPs remain well represented across AMA (WA)'s governance and advocacy work.

Leadership transition: Chair Dr Mary Wyatt will step down following the AGM. Members encouraged to consider taking on the role; election to be held at the next meeting. ■

Rural Doctors

Chair: Dr Paddy Glackin | Meeting 16 June

Protecting a strong rural voice: Proposed changes to the federal AMA's committee structure discussed; rural health could lose focus if it becomes one of several areas considered by a broader committee. Members support maintaining a dedicated rural voice that recognises the distinct workforce, infrastructure, and service challenges.

Rural workforce/practice sustainability: Discussion on practice closures and subsequent pressure on neighbouring services and local governments. Challenge to attract and retain experienced rural doctors; reliance on temporary and locum arrangements. Sustainable planning must reflect the realities of rural practice and permanent workforce solutions.

2027 Industrial Agreement: Negotiation process to focus on identifying high-priority claims and giving members the opportunity to shape the log of claims. Group now has representation on the Bargaining Planning Team, alongside Organisers, Industrial staff, and other Practice Group representatives.

Potential rural priorities discussed – improving rural incentives; reviewing how areas eligible for additional support are determined; seeking parity for Rural Generalists south of the 26th parallel. Members encouraged to participate in upcoming bargaining processes.

Telehealth & safe working: Ongoing Telehealth and Recall Review discussed; doctors providing significant clinical advice remotely while on call, without appropriate recognition or remuneration. Discussed relationship between telehealth, rostering, fatigue and workplace safety, and risks of doctors driving long distances after working long shifts.

Hospital Health Check: Discussion on HHC results and how to progress recommendations across rural services. Some areas improved, but ongoing concerns around wellbeing, sick leave access, bullying, harassment and discrimination. Continued attention needed, particularly through local workplace structures and engagement with rural DiTs.

Supporting rural doctors: Important to strengthen engagement with rural members and ensure regular opportunities to connect with AMA (WA) representatives. Further regional visits planned; members encouraged to participate. Membership data could be useful in understanding rural workforce density and reflect rural priorities in future bargaining. Challenges for rural GP registrars raised, including relocation costs, housing, and existing support arrangements. ■



Public Hospital Doctors

Chair: Dr Tony Ryan | Meeting 22 June

Workplace relations: Melissa Wagner introduced herself as the AMA (WA)'s new Organiser and spoke about the bargaining strategy for the next public health doctors' agreement. Discussion ensued, with feedback from senior doctors on the strategy.

Telehealth review: Update on ongoing review of telehealth and recall arrangements, following rounds of consultation. Key issues under consideration – remuneration for after-hours cognitive and telephone work; how to document and measure this work; potential for structured call-triage pathways. The AMA (WA) is awaiting the final report to help inform the next log of claims.

Hospital reports: Joondalup Health Campus – some instability due to recent leadership changes, but service is beginning to stabilise. Ramsay Health Care – expanding its public-bed partnership with NMHS at Glengarry; approximately 40-45 step-down and geriatric care beds planned, and new K-block beds opening for winter. Ongoing challenges accessing WA Health digital medical records and PACS for public patients treated by Ramsay; legal, privacy and IT compatibility issues continue to affect access. Armadale Health Service – bed pressures ongoing. Concerns about governance arrangements for new Women's and Children's Hospital, to be co-located with SMHS, administered by NMHS. North Metropolitan Health Service – proposed full-time Exec Director of Medical Services role, bringing structure in line with existing arrangements in South and East Metro Health Services. Ongoing restructure consultation process at NMHS raised, with concerns about changes to job description forms and limited notice given to affected doctors. ■

Doctors in Training

Chairs: Dr Owen Taylor-Williams & Dr Nicole Burger
Meeting 8 June

Telehealth review: Junior doctors shared their experiences directly with the independent reviewers undertaking the WA Health Medical Practitioner Telehealth Review, alongside Jessie Poon from System Wide Industrial Relations (SWIR). Insights into increasing volume and complexity of after-hours calls, impact on fatigue and wellbeing, and challenges of balancing clinical responsibilities with adequate rest. Importance of doctors' access to support and advice pathways, particularly in regional and community settings,

where timely specialist input can help support patient care and reduce unnecessary hospital presentations.

Fatigue, safety & workforce sustainability: Members discussed the broader impact of frequent after-hours responsibilities on doctor wellbeing, workforce retention and patient safety. Highlighted that many DiTs are managing significant workloads outside standard hours, often involving complex clinical decision-making and professional responsibility. Group heard perspectives from representatives across different practice settings.

General practice & regional perspectives: Discussion on unique challenges faced by GP registrars and doctors working outside the hospital system, including access to advice, professional liability, and importance of strong support networks. ■

IMG Committee

Chair: Dr Priya Balanarayanan | Inaugural Meeting 30 June

New committee & leadership: Dr Krishnapriya (Priya) Balanarayanan elected as Chair, with Dr Siddarth Viswanath and Dr Joelle Reid serving as the Deputy Chairs.

Defining priorities: Confirmed committee's purpose to identify key issues affecting IMGs and support the AMA (WA)'s advocacy to improve pathways into training, fellowship and ongoing medical careers. Priority areas – registration processes, recruitment practices, supervision arrangements, Area of Need positions, workplace wellbeing, pay and conditions, and improving awareness of available support.

IMG engagement: Agreement to meet quarterly. Discussed ways to strengthen communication among members and wider IMG community, and opportunities to increase IMG engagement through hospital inductions, professional events, social media and targeted communications.

Training and orientation support: Need highlighted for practical orientation and education to help IMGs transition into the Australian health system. Topics suggested – employment contracts, understanding payslips, salary packaging, workplace expectations, navigating hospital systems. Discussion on observership opportunities and support for mandatory training requirements.

Workplace support & wellbeing: Challenges experienced by IMGs, particularly around psychosocial safety, rural and regional practice, and understanding employment conditions. Opportunities considered to strengthen peer support networks and improve visibility of IMG representatives across health services, while continuing to promote available workplace and wellbeing support. ■