



New DiT representative lays out her agenda

Dr Nicole Burger

Co-Chair, AMA (WA) Doctors in Training Practice Group

As the newly elected Co-Chair of the Doctors in Training Practice Group, I'd like to briefly introduce myself and outline the areas I'm passionate about advancing over the term.

I am a paediatric advanced trainee specialising in General Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at the Child and Adolescent Health Service. While our clinical backgrounds shape much of who we are, every junior doctor brings experiences, values and aspirations that go beyond their job title. For me, that includes tending an enthusiastic home garden, spending time with my dachshund, and leaning on the support of my family. These personal moments keep me grounded and remind me of the importance of protecting time outside medicine.

My goal is to promote the wellbeing, safety and professional growth of junior doctors across Western Australia. This includes ensuring workplaces are safe, rosters are fair, overtime is paid, and that no doctor feels isolated when faced with bullying, discrimination or other workplace concerns. Junior doctors deserve workplaces where they can learn, thrive, and feel valued. Equally important is ensuring doctors know how to access support and feel secure raising concerns, trusting that the process will be confidential, professional, and taken seriously.

A key focus of mine is supporting a workplace culture where overtime is easily accessible and administrative barriers are minimised. The introduction of centralised overtime systems across health services has streamlined processes and improved consistency. While no system is perfect, early outcomes have been encouraging, and ongoing feedback will continue to guide improvements. These changes represent a meaningful shift in recognising the time, dedication and unseen labour that junior doctors contribute every day.

Professional development has become increasingly demanding as training requirements expand. Medicine evolves rapidly, and training pathways grow more competitive. Doctors face more courses, assessments, and competencies than ever before, making access to resources essential.

In the recent bargaining cycle, I advocated for increases to the professional development allowance and the ability to accrue all professional development leave. These changes help junior doctors engage in high-quality learning with fewer financial or

logistical barriers – an investment not only in individuals, but in the future leaders of our workforce.

Equally important is fostering a culture that respects doctors' time, both during and outside of work hours. Protecting rosters, paying all overtime, and supporting manageable workloads are critical to maintaining the fabled work-life balance. Sustainable careers are built when doctors feel their time is valued, their wellbeing is prioritised, and they have space to recharge outside clinical duties. While progress has been made, ongoing effort is needed to embed these practices.

I am particularly excited about the implementation of the Joint Consultative Committee. This will provide a direct forum for junior and senior medical staff to meet with hospital leaders, supported by the AMA (WA), to raise issues collaboratively. It is a promising new avenue for doctors' voices to shape meaningful, lasting change.

Looking ahead, one area that warrants further attention is non-clinical time. As digital systems expand and administrative tasks grow, doctors spend increasing hours on work outside patient-facing care. Other states already include protected non-clinical time in rosters – ensuring WA doctors have similar time within paid hours is essential for wellbeing, fairness and respect.

I'm looking forward to working with colleagues across all sites and training levels over the coming term. Your experiences, insights and advocacy shape our collective progress, and I am committed to ensuring your voices continue to be heard. Please reach out if you have questions, ideas or concerns. Together, we can build a safer, more supportive and sustainable workplace for doctors in training. ■

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