

AMA (WA) member named WA's Young Australian of the Year

AMA (WA) member Dr Haseeb Riaz is the Young Australian of the Year for WA. Dr Riaz won the accolade with Gareth Shanthikumar. The positive masculinity educators co-founded the educational service **MAN UP** and have reached thousands of students to address the root causes of poor mental health and gender-based violence.

Dr Riaz is an Intern at Royal Perth Hospital. He is a former Dr YES Coordinator, and previously held a number of advocacy roles, including Chair of the Medical Student Council of WA, Chair and Board Director of the Australian Medical Students' Association, and Medical Student Member of the Australian Medical Council.

Haseeb (25) and Gareth (27) had their fair share of challenges growing up, including struggling with negative emotions and transitioning from high school to adult life.

Haseeb and Gareth felt that negative stereotypes of masculinity were harming young men, so they established MAN UP to help young men strengthen their mental health, communicate openly, and build pathways to healthier lives. Through workshops on male culture, respectful relationships



Young Australians of the Year for WA: Dr Haseeb Riaz and Gareth Shanthikumar. *Photo credit: NADC/Salty Dingo*

and emotional coping, they provide boys with safe, relatable spaces to explore their identity, relationships and emotional literacy.

At MAN UP, Haseeb and Gareth address the root causes of poor mental health and gender-based violence, equipping boys with tools for self-awareness and empathy before harmful behaviours take root. Both founders continue to volunteer their time to MAN UP alongside their professional careers.

Together, they've reached thousands of students and have built partnerships with educators, community leaders and mental health advocates across Australia.

The WA recipients will join those from other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2026. ■