



# We walk with giants at the AMA (WA)

**Dr Kyle Hoath**  
AMA (WA) President



**Y**ou don't have to be the Chief Health Officer or Chief Medical Officer of this State to be a member of the Australian Medical Association (WA). But there's something comforting in the realisation that those in the most senior roles in health choose to maintain their membership of this proud and historic organisation.

Both Dr Andy Robertson and Dr Simon Towler are in the process of retiring from those roles, as you can read more about in this edition of *Medicus*, and we all wish them well in the next period of their careers, after years of selfless service.

We have also recently lost a former AMA (WA) president and a towering figure in WA health. Vale Professor Bryant Stokes, whose career in government and clinical governance roles, including stints as Acting Director General of Health and Acting Commissioner of Health, somehow (almost) overshadowed the extraordinary contributions he made to neurosurgery in this State and nationally, let alone his contributions to the AMA.

It is fitting that this edition should include reports on our newest medical graduates and Interns as well – many of whom have become AMA (WA) members, representing the continuity of the profession, and the importance of constant renewal and guardianship.

It was also pleasing to see an Honorary Degree from the University of WA awarded to another towering figure and AMA (WA) member, Professor Fiona Stanley.

While in this celebratory mode, it's unfortunate to have to reflect on the reality for doctors entering the profession in Western Australia.

A new Productivity Commission Report on Government Services puts WA at the bottom of the national league table for public hospital doctor attrition. More than one in four WA doctors (26.4%) left the public hospital workforce in 2024 – a six-year high, compared to the national attrition rate of 24.2%.

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It's a dire statistic, reflective of the environment in which our world-class medical workforce is expected to operate.

In an interview with the media on this issue, I said:

“The important part here is doctors are still just people at the end of the day, and they are proud of what they do. In emergency departments, they're never going to turn people away. So those numbers of people waiting to be seen, they'll go up; but they're never going to get turned away – because the doctors want to do the right thing.

“But they do it under such dire circumstances, under pressure, under-resourced, overworked, in facilities that aren't up to scratch. Then we shouldn't be surprised that they contemplate doing other careers.”

This year, we have the start of negotiations for the next public hospital Industrial Agreement, a fundamental aspect of what the AMA (WA) offers to its members, and in turn non-member doctors, as well as contributing to the experience for the State's patients.

We implore members to get involved at committee level, engage, and contribute in whatever way you can. It's a fundamental right and responsibility to translate your own experience to an actionable agenda that we can present to the Government.

It's another big year. And though the seasons change, and our people come and go, our work and purpose continue. ■