

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland doctor wins AMA's Doctor in Training award

A Queensland doctor in training who volunteered her spare time to teach intern doctors and be a clinical coach for University of Queensland medical students has won the Australian Medical Association's Doctor in Training of the Year award 2023.

Dr Natasha Abeysekera was presented the award by AMA President Professor Steve Robson at an event in Brisbane last night, who said the award recognised the outstanding achievements of doctors in training in leadership and advocacy and encouraging the development of leadership skills.

"Dr Abeysekera's commitment and leadership has gone above and beyond, with countless hours devoted to supporting and encouraging younger doctors on a voluntary basis," Professor Robson said.

"This award recognises Dr Abeysekera's work, including making research opportunities more accessible to junior doctors by assisting in re-establishing the AMAQ JDC research programs, advocating for the mental health of junior doctors, teaching intern doctors and serving as a clinical coach for medical students at University of Queensland.

Dr Abeysekera has been a doctor in training in the Queensland health system for four years and has a keen interest in improving the lives and mental health of junior doctors. She helped to develop the Self-Care September program.

In Spring 2021 her article surrounding this topic was published in the AMA DoctorQ magazine. The article '100 years of physician suicide: call for action' led to the Queensland Health Wellbeing Summit, where her recommendation for the mental health and wellbeing to be a legislative requirement for hospitals and health services was first adopted by the then Minister for Health Yvette D'Ath MP.

Dr Abeysekera has held various leadership positions, including Co-Chair and Deputy Chair on the AMA (Qld) Council of Doctors in Training during the COVID-19 pandemic and has volunteered for the Queensland Medical Women's Society as Treasurer and Lead of Digital Communications, co-ordinating its regular newsletter and leading advocacy efforts.

She has written several articles for MJA InSight, including a call for action for physician wellbeing, and promoted women in medical leadership.

Professor Robson congratulated the other hard-working doctors in training who were nominated for the award.

"Each nominee should take with them a sense of achievement and personal pride that stems from their excellent work as an advocate for doctors in training and improved health care outcomes."

Contact: AMA Media: +61 427 209 753 media@ama.com.au



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