

## **The 2025 Colleges, Associations, and Societies Communique**

One hundred senior medical leaders from the Australian Medical Association, medical colleges, and professional associations and societies gathered in Canberra on 23 June 2025 to discuss key issues facing the healthcare sector and the medical profession.

Leaders had the opportunity to hear from — and ask questions of — the Minister for Health, Disability and Ageing Mark Butler.

With Minister Butler now overseeing the expanded portfolio of Health, Disability — including the NDIS — and Ageing there is potential to harness synergies across these interconnected sectors, enabling more integrated policy development and service delivery that better reflects the holistic needs of Australians.

Leaders also heard from: the Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, Dr Susan O'Dwyer; the CEO of the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency, Justin Untersteiner; the independent reviewer of the National Scheme's complexity review, Sue Dawson; as well as former Health Department Secretaries.

The discourse addressed priority issues currently affecting the health sector, including scope of practice, workforce planning and training, practitioner regulation and governance, doctors' health and wellbeing, broader healthcare challenges, and the future of healthcare in Australia.

A key theme that emerged from the meeting was the importance of doctors' health and wellbeing in enabling medical professionals to provide safe, high-quality care for their patients.

Public safety and the ability for patients to access high-quality care relies on doctors being supported to maintain both physical and mental health. This requires healthy workplaces, adequate funding models, balanced practitioner regulation and governance, strong workforce planning, and evidence-based scope of practice and training — all of which contribute to enabling doctors to practice safely.

### **Scope of practice**

Specialty group representatives — including those from general practice, emergency medicine, and ophthalmology — discussed successful collaborative models of medically-led team-based care that incorporate strong clinical governance arrangements within clinical practice.

The discussion highlighted broad agreement that all health professionals should be supported to work to the full breadth of their scope of practice. However, this must be done in a manner which does not compromise patient safety, duplicate services, or add to fragmentation of care.

## **Every Doctor, Every Setting action plan**

The AMA continues to advocate for a system-wide commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the medical profession. By partnering with Drs4Drs, we recognise that embedding wellbeing as a core strategic objective within organisational structures is essential to creating sustainable, supportive environments for doctors at every stage of their careers. This shift requires leadership across governments, departments, professional associations, training bodies, and employers to prioritise psychological safety as a fundamental component of professional practice.

## **Future of healthcare**

The practice of medicine and the delivery of healthcare are taking place in a rapidly changing environment. Demographic shifts, rapid technological advancements, rising patient expectations, and workforce and government fiscal constraints all present significant challenges for the profession. In partnership with the community, everyone must work collaboratively to address and overcome these challenges.

## **National Scheme: future reform directions**

Medical Board Chair Dr Susan O'Dwyer reiterated the Board's strong focus on supporting doctors in their clinical practice. The AMA strongly supports the principle that public safety must be managed alongside the health and wellbeing of the medical profession. An update on the implementation of the expedited pathway was also welcomed, and we look forward to continued collaboration to ensure its effectiveness across specialties.

Ahpra CEO Justin Untersteiner outlined the strategic priorities for moving forward with the National Scheme. It was reassuring to hear reform efforts are underway. This proactive stance reflects a shared commitment to improving regulatory processes and enhancing the practitioner experience, particularly in relation to notifications.

Sue Dawson, the independent reviewer of the current review into the National Scheme, shared the draft directions for reform with the medical profession. The final report to health ministers will outline key priorities for simplifying and streamlining the scheme.

The AMA, medical colleges, associations, and societies remain committed to working in partnership to advocate for a regulatory environment that is fair, transparent, and supports high-quality care.



Dr Danielle McMullen  
President  
Australian Medical Association



Dr Paul Beech  
FRANZCR, FAANMS  
President  
Australasian Association of Nuclear Medicine Specialists




Associate Professor Grace Kong  
FRACP, FAANMS  
ANZSNM MSIG Chair  
Australian and New Zealand  
Society of Nuclear Medicine




Dr Mark Sinclair  
MBBS, GAICD, FANZCA  
President, Australian Society of Anaesthetists




Dr Scott Fletcher  
B.MED.SC; M.B.B.S, FRCS  
President, Australian Orthopaedic  
Association




Dr Julie Agnew  
President, The Australian Society of  
Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery




Dr Peter Sumich  
MBBS, FRANZCO  
President, Australian Society of Ophthalmologists




Mr Stephen Milgate AM  
Chief Executive Officer, Australian Society  
of Orthopaedic Surgeons




Dr Sam Whittle  
MBBS(Hons), MClInEpi, FRACP  
President, Australian Rheumatology Association



Australian  
Rheumatology  
Association



Professor Sabe Sabesan  
President, Clinical Oncology Society of Australia



Mr Stephen Milgate AM  
Chief Executive Officer, Council of Procedural Specialists



Mr David Morgan  
President, Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons



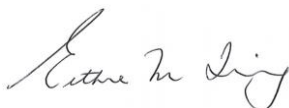
Dr Chris Gillespie  
Treasurer, Colorectal Surgical Society of Australia and New Zealand



Dr Priya Nair  
Vice President, College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand



Dr Hamish Alexander  
Vice President, Neurosurgical Society of Australasia



Ms Eithne Irving  
Chief Executive Officer, Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons



Dr Michael Wright  
MBBS MSC PhD FRACGP GAICD  
President, The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners





Professor Erwin Loh  
President, Royal Australasian College  
of Medical Administrators



Mr Cris Massis  
Chief Executive Officer, Royal Australasian College  
of Medical Administrators



Associate Professor Trishe Leong  
President, The Royal College of Pathologists  
of Australia



Dr Stephen Gourley  
President, Australasian College  
for Emergency Medicine



Australasian College  
for Emergency Medicine



Professor Steven Faux AM  
President, Rehabilitation Medicine Society  
of Australia and New Zealand



Dr Nisha Khot  
President Elect, The Royal Australian and New  
Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists



Mr Damian Ferrie  
Chief Executive Officer, The Royal Australian and New  
Zealand College of Psychiatrists

