

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 20 August 2026

AMA calls for fairer, more transparent fees for doctors in specialist training

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has released a position statement on the principles for supporting financial sustainability of specialist medical trainees, which calls on specialist medical colleges to make fees more transparent, predictable and fair.

Developed by the AMA's Council of Doctors in Training (CDT), the position statement builds on long standing CDT advocacy on the costs associated with medical training, including examinations, prerequisite course requirements and admission to fellowship.

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said the principles set a clear expectation for transparent, predictable fees that support trainee wellbeing and diversity, while recognising the central role colleges play in delivering high-quality training.

"The specialist medical training provided by colleges is a critical part of Australia's medical workforce pipeline," Dr McMullen said.

"Doctors in training are telling us — loud and clear — the cost of specialist training is a source of real financial stress and, in some cases, a barrier to progressing in their chosen field.

"The position statement we are releasing today supports constructive engagement with specialist medical colleges to find a balanced approach that recognises both trainee needs and system sustainability," Dr McMullen said.

The current structure of fees and additional costs can impose a substantial financial burden on trainees, while they're balancing clinical responsibilities, study obligations and family or relocation commitments.

Chair of the AMA's Council of Doctors in Training Dr Sanjay Hettige said these costs carry broader workforce implications.

"We already have a training capacity problem — there aren't enough specialist training places, and we'd like to see colleges and employers expand capacity so no capable doctor is left waiting to progress," Dr Hettige said.

"On top of that, when training costs put whole specialties out of reach or make it harder to attract doctors to rural and regional communities, it is not only unfair to individual trainees — it is a workforce problem."

The position statement sets out a clear expectation that changes to training fees be fair, transparent, communicated in advance, and made with consideration of their impact on trainee welfare.

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"Predictability and justification are critical to fairness, but currently there is insufficient information available to trainees about how much their training will cost and how their fees are used," Dr Hettige said.

"We are continuing to call for greater fee transparency, accountability for how fees are spent, and involvement in financial decisions through meaningful consultation within specialist medical colleges."

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