

Australian Medical Association Limited
ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



STATE AND TERRITORY AMAs RECOGNISED FOR ADVOCACY AND MEDIA WORK

AMA State Media Awards **2019 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon** **Sofitel Brisbane, 24-26 May 2019**

State and Territory AMAs have once again been recognised for their exceptional work in advocacy and communications over the past year.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, tonight presented awards acknowledging the outstanding work of State and Territory AMAs in a range of categories including Best Lobby Campaign, Best Public Health Campaign, Best State Publication, National Advocacy, and Most Innovative use of Website or New Media.

This year's winners are:

Best Public Health Campaign 2019 – AMA Victoria

The Medically Supervised Injecting Centre at North Richmond

AMA Victoria has been advocating for a medically supervised injecting centre (MSIC) since 2012 as a proven harm minimisation measure, based on thorough research and sound science.

In 2017, the Victorian Coroner's Court released statistics showing that 477 Victorians died of a drug overdose in the previous year. While about 90 MSICs were in operation around the world, including in Sydney's Kings Cross, a MSIC had never been trialled in Victoria.

There was substantial opposition to the North Richmond trial when it was proposed in 2017, with the Victorian Liberal party announcing it would stop the pilot trial if it won the 2018 State election.

AMA Victoria kept its message clear and simple: "We support a trial of a medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond, believe the trial should be given the time to demonstrate results and be robustly evaluated and, if it proves a success, we will all be the beneficiaries."

It established itself as an expert source on the subject of harm minimisation, presented unbiased information and counteracted misunderstandings, and used the experiences of members who, as doctors, have had to resuscitate overdose patients in car parks and other public areas.

AMA Victoria made submissions to Parliamentary inquiries, wrote to all members of Parliament, and made repeated media appearances to build the case for the MSIC.

Since the centre opened in July 2018, it has had 40,000 visits, and 650 overdoses have been prevented.

Judge Amanda Bresnan, executive officer at National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, said the campaign demonstrated a consistent and long-term process and strategy to achieve an outcome.

"It also tackled a very difficult issue, but did so in a way which built a case on evidence-based policy and being consistent with AMA Victoria's policy and position," Ms Bresnan said.

“They set out to achieve - and did so - clear messaging; had a credible and respected spokesperson; used parliamentary process and the media; and developed a range of materials to build their campaign.

“They confronted negativity and misinformation directly and stayed consistent with their case, which led to the intended outcome of the supervised injecting facility being established, supported and continuing.”

Best State Publication 2019 – AMA Victoria

Vicdoc

Vicdoc is AMA Victoria’s principal publication, and provides members with relevant and unique information and analysis of medico-legal, workplace/industrial relations, policy and political matters, and the efforts and undertakings of the AMA. It is published six times a year.

Vicdoc is not a peer-reviewed medical journal, nor is it a news publication. It provides members with strategic content aligned with AMA Victoria’s priority goals for the Victorian health system, alongside other information that is specifically targeted at the State’s medical profession, from interns to retirees.

Its objectives are to inform, connect, and lead.

Vicdoc actively seeks and receives feature articles from a range of external stakeholders, including Doctors for the Environment Australia, Hudson Institute of Medical Research, and the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

In 2018, it introduced two regular career profile series – choosing a specialty, in which members reflect on their careers and selected fields, with the aim of helping others who are still to make a decision; and career conversation, which profiles doctors who have explored alternative and non-traditional careers both within and outside clinical medicine.

Judge Sue Dunlevy, the national health reporter at News Corp, said that *Vicdoc's* highly engaging and wide-ranging content made it the standout AMA publication for 2019.

“The fascinating interview with Dr Graeme Killer, the doctor to five sitting Australian Prime Ministers, gave a terrific insight into a rare and unusual medical job,” Ms Dunlevy said.

“The article about the bush GP being asked to operate on an injured dog was a gem.

“There was plenty of great practical information for doctors on subjects from choosing a specialty to managing a family while practising medicine.

“Up-to-date medical information on thunderstorm-related asthma, cervical cancer screening, and other issues made the publication useful and directly relevant for doctors.”

Most Innovative Use of Website or New Media 2019 – AMA Tasmania

TASTalk_Media Review

Over many years, AMA Tasmania has provided a unique service to a select subscribed few, offering access to a curated review of all daily media mentions relevant to health in Tasmania.

During a 2018 Southern Division meeting, an idea was formulated to further develop and expand the service, both in the recipient list and the breadth of information.

A daily formulated media monitoring and AMA Tasmania news review service – *TASTalk_Media Review* – was launched.

All members were automatically subscribed, and news came from many sources, including but not limited to AMA Federal, AMA Tasmania media, local media, and other sources as identified as to relevancy and interest.

With a less than 10 per cent opt-out rate in more than 12 months, and Tasmanian health sector influencers actively seeking to be subscribed to the daily alerts, along with increased engagement from members, the AMA Tasmania Board has been genuinely impressed with the success of this activity.

Judge Daniel Sanguinetti, a film producer, writer, and online content maker, said that often, innovation stems from thinking outside the box.

“I congratulate AMA Tasmania for developing an effective and successful strategy that, on this occasion, has come from innovating something that already exists within the box,” Mr Sanguinetti said.

“Delivering a clear and concise message has become more difficult with the advent of the fake news era, questions of journalism agenda and integrity, and saturated social media feeds.

“A tool to help wade through the weight of internet news, for the sake of relevance and timeliness, allows for clarity, which is essential for the advocacy of the AMA’s current position on news and policy.

“Any user of such a tool can, with some assurance, trust the curated media review will advocate for the most current position of the organisation.

“AMA Tasmania’s entry acknowledges that media monitoring is not a new concept. But their decision to implement a media monitoring and news review tool, specifically focused on their own State’s communication strategy needs, has resulted in increased engagement from members, and health sector influencers actively seeking to be subscribed.

“This is a win for AMA Tasmania and for the greater AMA membership, and I hope other States and Territories consider, if they have not already, implementing their own similar service on the back of Tasmania’s new media successes.”

Best Lobby Campaign 2019 – AMA New South Wales ***Bupa Campaign – The Fight for Choice***

In early March 2018, private health giant Bupa announced changes to its Medical Gap Scheme, advising patients that they would only qualify for gap cover if they are treated in a Bupa-contracted facility.

The shock announcement followed closely on the heels of Bupa’s decision to remove gap fee coverage for hip and knee replacements, pregnancy, and other major procedures for patients on “minimum benefits” policies – about one third of its Australian members.

AMA NSW launched a two-stage campaign – to raise awareness about Bupa’s actions among doctors and patients, and to force a backdown from Bupa.

It campaigned through social media, e-newsletters, The NSW Doctor magazine, and mainstream media, as well as meeting with stakeholders, holding town hall meetings, lobbying the State Government, and meeting with the Bupa CEO.

The reaction was swift and strong. More than 500 people shared AMA NSW’s email to members. Within a week, 6400 Bupa policy holders made enquiries about other funds, and almost 1000 people switched from Bupa altogether.

Bupa initially tweaked the changes, but, in June, it announced a backflip on the policy.

Judge Chris Fry, managing director of government relations firm Public Policy Solutions, said the NSW campaign had forced a policy reversal from an international health giant.

“Given the size of the insurer concerned, this issue had the very real potential to not only impact on the NSW system, but also spread rapidly through the insurance market nationally,” Mr Fry said.

“AMA NSW reacted very swiftly and forcefully in commencing to oppose this unexpected development. It implemented a very effective strategy involving the profession, the NSW Government, and the public in explaining the ramifications of this policy change.

“The quick action meant that consumer reaction to the new arrangements was very timely, with significant commercial pressure being applied to the insurer after only one week, resulting in a partial backdown.

“Continued pressure arising from increasing public understanding of the policy resulted in the insurer backing down on the proposal in June, with a reversal of the policy for all public hospitals.

“The campaign was very successful in every respect and, as such, I judge it to be this year’s winner.”

National Advocacy Award 2019 – Federal AMA

2019 AMA Public Hospital Report Card

Highly commended – AMA Western Australia

GP Registrar New Fee Category

Every year, the AMA releases a Public Hospital Report Card bringing together a range of published data to assess overall public hospital performance and provide State-by-State reports on emergency waiting times, elective surgery waiting times, and levels of Commonwealth funding.

It requires months of research and compilation by Federal AMA staff, and is a very effective lobbying tool to call for greater funding and resources for public hospitals.

This year, the Report Card’s traditional March release was delayed to coincide with the Federal election campaign to maximise its impact.

The AMA Public Affairs team negotiated an exclusive ‘drop’ of the story with News Ltd for the morning of Easter Saturday, with parallel media activity also arranged under embargo with ABC Radio AM, and commercial television and radio outlets.

The story ran on the front or near the front of all News Ltd tabloids, including regionals, and prominently in News online services.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, held a doorstep media conference in Melbourne, which was attended by all networks, and a live interview on Sky News.

The story prompted Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Health Minister Greg Hunt to hold an unscheduled media conference that afternoon to claim record public hospital funding under the Coalition.

Follow-up activity by State and Territory AMAs generated another round of media coverage.

Judge Simon Banks, managing director of government relations firm Hawker Britton, said the Public Hospital Report Card was a clear winner.

“The obvious public policy objective of the Public Hospital Report Card, its cut-through above the noise of the current Federal election campaign, and its capacity to influence future public policy made it this year’s winner,” Mr Banks said.

“While the Report is annual and thus not new, it has clearly become a trusted source of information.

“Timing of the report’s release and localisation of its message were clearly important to its impact.”

Mr Banks also highly commended AMA Western Australia for its proposal to encourage more GP Registrars to join, “not only for its success, but also because it acts as a template for other branches of the AMA to benefit from.”

24 May 2019

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>

MAJOR SPONSORS



Leadership Development Dinner



Leadership Development Dinner



CONFERENCE SPONSORS

