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****EMBARGOED UNTIL 6PM AEST, FRIDAY 25 MAY 2018****

**STATE AND TERRITORY AMAs RECOGNISED FOR
 ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS WORK**

AMA State Media Awards
**2018 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon
 QT Canberra, 25-27 May 2018**

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

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, 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 Lobby Campaign 2018 – AMA

AMA Tasmania – State Election Campaign

The hard-fought Tasmanian election campaign has also led to a win for AMA Tasmania for the Best Lobby Campaign.

AMA Tasmania kept the public’s attention firmly on health throughout the campaign with sensible, practical suggestions for the future structure of the State health system that were both appealing to voters and worthy of support from both major parties.

The judges, led by Canberra lobbyist Chris Fry, said the campaign led to significant increases in resources across all major areas – extra beds, an increased focus on waiting lists, a significant boost to mental health services, improved palliative care services, and extra infrastructure including a commitment to commence the Hobart Hospital redevelopment.

“But the really big achievement was for the Government to accept that the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) model needed fundamental reform,” the judges said.

“The Government agreed to restructure the arrangements so that the over-centralisation of the model was reversed, and to introduce significantly stronger local decision-making into Tasmanian hospitals.

“Day-to-day autonomy is being introduced into local hospitals. A more regional focus is being established, catering for particular circumstances.

“The THS is being restructured, made more efficient, and the savings are being reinvested in better services. The THS now has to report through the Department.”

Best Public Health Campaign from a State or Territory 2018 – AMA Western Australia

Starting the Conversation, Tackling Adolescence Suicide

AMA WA has tackled the difficult issue of talking to children and teenagers about mental health and self-harm, with its *Starting the Conversation, Tackling Adolescence Suicide* campaign.

The mental health module has been added to the successful Dr YES adolescent youth program, in which medical student volunteers go into schools to run small group discussions with high school students.

The module was significantly revised in 2017 following feedback from high school students, who indicated that they wanted to know more about self-harm and suicide, so that they can support their friends as well as seek help for themselves.

The judging panel, headed by Public Health Association CEO Michael Moore, said that mental health is one of the top issues in public health at the moment, and that the campaign is highly relevant to the young people at school.

They commended the range and quality of the campaign material, describing it as a carefully constructed and effective program, with evaluation showing that more than 90 per cent of participants had achieved better coping strategies following the sessions.

“This program needs to be spread beyond Western Australia,” the judges, led by Public Health Association of Australia CEO Michael Moore, said.

Best State Publication 2018 – AMA Victoria

Vicdoc

For the second year in a row, AMA Victoria has won the Best State Publication for *Vicdoc*.

Judges described *Vicdoc* as a “beautifully-produced, good read, full of well-written and researched articles on clinical, industrial, and human interest topics - much more than a glorified newsletter or mouthpiece for a professional group”.

Over the year, *Vicdoc* tackled key professional issues such as doctors’ mental health, unrostered overtime, and how to use the new My Health Record. At the same time, it focused on breakthrough medical discoveries, including new strategies in breast cancer and interesting investigations into abuse of over-the-counter medications.

The coverage was rounded out with human interest stories, including how doctors with disability have made it in the profession, and the work of Australian doctors overseas.

Judges, led by News Corp national health reporter Sue Dunlevy, said that *Vicdoc’s* glossy, clean layout made it a pleasure to read.

Most Innovative Use of Website or New Media 2018 – AMA

The most Innovative Use of Website or New Media Award recognises that State and Territory AMAs can use different media to get messages to members and the public.

AMA NSW has won this year's award for its Hospital Health Check website, which the judges commended for its simplicity and clarity.

“(The use of) large, colour-coded letter grade graphics, tabulated alongside hospital names in rows, is clear, concise, and communicates directly and comparatively the results of the survey,” the judges, led by film producer, writer, and online content maker, Dan Sanguineti, said.

“Too often the delivery of key information becomes overwhelming in graphics, animations, and transitions, and a basic statement of results as displayed on the Hospital Health Check website is a welcome approach, that pitches perfectly to the desired successful outcome.

“Through media engagement, the survey results on the site allowed the policy debate discussions to shift and benefit the membership represented.

“This was shown by the NSW Government announcement on rule changes in line to address the information presented.”

National Advocacy Award 2018 – AMA

AMA New South Wales – Marriage Equality – “This is a Health Issue”

The National Advocacy Award is given to the State or Territory AMA that has worked best with the Federal AMA on an advocacy campaign.

AMA New South Wales is the winner for its campaign in favour of marriage equality, which included the Federal AMA Position Statement on Marriage Equality, a video produced by Federal AMA and AMA NSW featuring past Federal AMA Presidents speaking in favour of marriage equality, and a doctors' rally at Martin Place in Sydney, organised by AMA NSW and supported by the Federal AMA.

The judges, led by Canberra lobbyist Simon Banks, said marriage equality was a significant issue for the profession, and one that divided views within the wider profession and community.

“NSW's submission involved public interest advocacy both directly, and through the prominent use of both traditional and social media, to highlight the health implications of the legal recognition of same sex marriage,” the judges said.

“It also compelled members of the wider profession to step up and take a stance on this public health - not merely legal - issue.

“The campaign exhibited the selfless quality that any true profession can rightly take pride in. For these reasons, the NSW submission is this year's winner.”

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