



Secretary General's Report

The year 2014 has been a key year in the evolution of Australian Medical Association Limited. At the Annual General Meeting in May 2014, the members adopted a new Constitution which established a skills-based Board to manage the governance, strategy and finances of the company. After a short period with an interim Board the new Board was established, meeting for the first time at the end of July. The Board members are the President, Vice President, and representatives of each State and Territory AMA, and the Council of Doctors in Training.

One of the early actions of the new Board was to develop a strategic plan to cover the period 2014 to 2017. The Board adopted a mission statement which reflects the AMA's purpose: Leading Australia's doctors – Promoting Australia's health. A separate report on the Board's activities is found in this Annual Report.

The constitutional change enabled Federal Council to focus its work on medico-political policy matters. In its revised role, Federal Council has become much more effective in the early stages of policy development, both informed by, and informing, the work of the Council's committees and the AMA's external engagement.

At a policy level, the work of the secretariat in 2014 was dominated by the response required to combat the consequences of the Federal Budget in May, which impacted significantly on health funding. The advocacy was constant throughout the year. The engagement with members across the country was prolific, with more correspondence received on the proposed changes to Medicare than any recent issue.

Public health remained a key policy objective, with a shift in focus towards running public health campaigns. A successful National Alcohol Summit was held in October, drawing together a broad-based group of interests. The Summit issued a communiqué at the end of two days of discussion, calling on the Federal Government to take leadership in developing policies to address the harms caused by excessive use of alcohol.

Increased digital engagement was a feature of 2014. Social media has become an essential element of the AMA's communications, with both Twitter and Facebook adding to the reach of the AMA's advocacy. AMA TV was created to provide content via the website and social media to carry the AMA's messages from the President and other leaders. At the end of 2014 the revamped AMA website was launched, providing 'homes' for different member segments. *Doctorportal* was also launched during 2014 and over time will become the location for information, tools and resources for all doctors, members and non-members alike but with additional benefits for members.

The year 2014 was one of significant change in the governance and operations of the AMA. These changes laid the foundation for the future growth of the AMA to further develop its standing as an effective voice for its members and their patients.

Anne Trimmer
Secretary General