



BLMA President's Message

Dr Bob Brown

UPCOMING EVENTS

brisbanelma.org/events/upcoming

THURSDAY 31 MARCH – confirmed

Educational Dinner meeting and Annual General Meeting

Time: 6:00pm – AGM
6:30pm for 7:00pm Dinner

Location: The Emporium, South Bank

RSVP: By 24 March 2022 via the website

THURSDAY 19 MAY – confirmed

Conjoint AVANT/BLMA Educational and Dinner meeting

Time: 6:00pm for 6:30pm

Location: Qld Cricketer's Club, Gabba

All details will be posted shortly on BLMA website

TUESDAY 19 JULY – confirmed

Educational Dinner meeting in conjunction with I-Med Radiology

Time: 6:00pm for 6:30pm

Location: Qld Cricketer's Club, Gabba

All details will be posted shortly on BLMA website



Many thanks to QML Pathology couriers for distributing our newsletter throughout Brisbane.

Welcome to all Synapse readers, particularly the members of the Brisbane Local Medical Association (BLMA).

This is the final time that I will be writing to you as President of the Association.

I have enjoyed many years in the AMA, as Past president of the AMA Queensland, as well as my involvement with Local Medical Associations, which include the Redcliffe and Districts LMA (REDAMA) and the Northside LMA (now transformed into the successful BLMA)

In the past twelve months, with the hard and exceptional work of a number of members of the BLMA, we have been able to increase the scope and activity, as well as the membership of the BLMA. We have a wonderful Management Team, which includes an excellent executive of Hasthika Ellepola (Vice President), Dilip Dhupelia (Treasurer) and Ian Hadwen (Secretary). I recommend that you familiarise yourself with the Management team as listed in this edition of SYNAPSE.

I wish the ongoing management team a clear horizon and a full sail!

We have experienced challenging times for various reasons over the past 2 years. We have all had issues associated with the pandemic, and we should be grateful that there is finally some light on the horizon. Obviously, we are sorry for any inconveniences, hardships and challenges that you may have had, but we all hope that we will have some form of normality in the time ahead.

Our charter states that we need to have an AGM before the end of March, and our intention is to have it face to face. The AGM will be held on Thursday 31 March at the

Emporium Hotel at South Bank, in conjunction with another high class educational event.

Any members who wish to nominate for positions on the Management Committee, please notify our Honorary Secretary, Dr Ian Hadwen, whose details are in the newsletter, as well as on the website.

The BLMA is at an exciting growth phase. As members, I ask that you please encourage your other medical colleagues to consider the merits of joining the BLMA. I personally feel that it is important to be active within our Profession, whether clinically, or in a representative capacity, or both.

The BLMA will continue its growth trajectory. A large BLMA will ensure that our members' concerns and ambitions are heard. Our strength will be in our members.

As outgoing President of the BLMA, I thank our members and Sponsors, without whom our activities would not be possible.

It is my great privilege to also thank Renee O'Brien from AMA Queensland's Business Support Services, as well as a large team of like-minded people, whom I would label as "behind the scenes". I thank each and every one of them. Not only have they been tolerant but supportive and helpful to pedantic me as well as all of our management team.

It's been an honour to see the transformation of the BLMA in the past 12 months. I feel proud to have been part of this team. I have met many new colleagues for the first time. I remain excited about our future growth and wish the new President and management committee every success, and I look forward to meeting with all of you at our future exciting functions.

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The Brisbane Local Medical Association welcomes contributions from members, especially **"Letters to the Editor"**. Please address all correspondence to:

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Email: felicity.jensen@health.qld.gov.au

April 2022 (Issue 5) Newsletter

Deadline will be Tuesday 19 April 2022

- ▶ Would you like to comment or suggest articles to be published?
- ▶ What would you like to see in the newsletter?

Our circulation via email, post and online reaches medical practitioners all over Brisbane!

Contact: Renee O'Brien

Email: r.obrien@amaq.com.au

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**Are You a Member?**

If you are not a member, please complete the application available on our website:

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Enquiries: Dr Dilip Dhupelia
dhupelia@bigpond.com

Are you listed on the Member Directory on our website? Are your details correct?

Directory form available on the website.

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A change in the model of care of patients with COVID-19

By Dr Maria Boulton

Happy New Year. 2022, the year of Omicron and the RAT, has started with a bang. Many of us have by now been exposed to COVID or have had loved ones infected with COVID. Most of us are caring for patients who have COVID or have had COVID.

Brisbane, Gold Coast and Cairns have gone through the peak of the COVID wave as I write this article. The COVID test positivity rate is increasing in other areas of Queensland which are expected to reach peak in the next few weeks if they haven't already.

One of the biggest challenges to all areas of the health care system, RACFs and the disability care sector has been workforce shortages caused by furloughing, illness or health care workers caring for ill dependents. This was compounded by the lack of rapid antigen tests and pressure on PCR testing. This could not have happened at a worse time as we are caring for more patients with COVID in the community and

continue to provide COVID vaccines (boosters, 5-11 COVID vaccines) while providing usual medical care.

My clinic went into disaster response mode as half of our staff were away with COVID (thanks to New Year's celebrations), furloughed or caring for loved ones with COVID. We were fortunate to have planned a "worst case scenario" response prior to the borders opening and were set up for all our team members to work from home. Thankfully our receptionists who were well but in isolation were able to answer phone calls, action messages and more from their homes and we were able to keep the practice open.

The shortage of PPE and lack of fit testing have worsened. As small businesses it is difficult to compete with the buying power of large wholesalers, the Australian Government, and the USA, which is providing N95s masks to its population. This is why we have continued to advocate strongly for



*Dr Maria Boulton
AMA Queensland Director and
Chair of Committee of General
Practice, QMWS VP, Family Doctors
Plus Director and Founder*

Government to facilitate PPE supply and fit testing. Late last year the Australian Government responded to our call and GPs who need PPE can now request it via their PHNs. Unfortunately, the distribution processes were hampered and supplies have taken a long time to arrive. Some GPs only received their PPE supplies in the last few days. The distribution of PPE from the national medical stockpile will soon change to another provider-DHL, but GPs will need to still order their PPE and pulse oximeters through their PHN. The Federal "Living with COVID" taskforce expects that with improvements in distribution,

orders will be delivered much faster and GPs will be able to track their deliveries in real time. AMA Queensland together with the rest of the Qld GP Alliance peak bodies (RACGP, RDAQ, ACRRM) is also working with the State Government to facilitate urgent access to PPE and fit testing for Qld GPs. GPs in rural and remote areas (MM3-MM7) can now access an urgent supply of PPE through their local Hospital and Health Service (HHS), if they are unable to source it by other means. Queensland Health facilitated fit testing at the RBWH in early January - the service was inundated. Only 150 GPs were fit tested. Many missed out and we continue to advocate for this service to be offered again. Many of the PHNs are offering quantitative or qualitative fit testing, with quantitative fit testing being the gold standard. The challenge is not only accessing fit testing but also finding the model of N95 masks that fits. It is incredible to think that it has been two years since I first started advocating on this issue. The same issue is being faced by non-GP specialists and RACF and disability care workers.

To help alleviate the lack of access to COVID tests, AMA Queensland reached out to private pathology companies to see if they had the capacity to offer priority COVID PCR testing for GPs, non-GP private specialists, their staff and families. We are thankful for all private pathology companies who have responded and set services up within days of being approached. Even though the line-ups for PCR tests in Brisbane are not as long, we need to prepare for similar demand in other areas of Queensland and for the future. Details of this can be found at: qld.ama.com.au/news/priority-testing-doctor. This valuable service will help us keep and return our team members to work. The idea to approach private pathology companies to request for this service was inspired by a GP

colleague from the Gold Coast who approached a private pathology who had a service set up in two days.

The care of COVID-positive patients in the community has pivoted to a self-care/opt in model. Primary care will continue to care for the low-moderate risk patients, the bulk of patients, while the Hospital and Health Service (HHS) will care for high-risk patients as well as provide access to monoclonal antibody therapies. Following our advocacy for escalation pathways that GPs can access to support their patients, each HHS now has their own pathway for escalation of care and access to monoclonal antibody treatment. These can be accessed through your local Healthpathways website, along with current guidelines on caring for COVID patients. AMA Queensland is seeking feedback on issues that GPs have escalating patient care so that we can provide feedback. This new model has several points of entry including ringing Healthdirect, the Qld Health website, Billie the Bot, National Coronavirus Hotline, logging your RAT result onto the Qld Health website or via a GP. These points of entry will not accommodate people who have no GP or have no access to technology. These are often vulnerable populations eg. homeless people.

COVID has affected the vulnerable in our community the most, in particular aged care residents. Vulnerable communities are also finding it very difficult to access PPE and RATs. Disability aged care workers are reporting difficulties accessing RATs, PPE and basic medical equipment such as giving sets. These vulnerable populations deserve better and solutions must be found to ensure their needs are met.

We now have access to new oral COVID treatments. The Commonwealth has provided a supply to ACCHOs. Other GPs must access these via their local HHS.

These medications are expected to move to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for GPs to be able to prescribe as larger quantities become available. AMA Queensland is planning to host a webinar on the oral COVID treatments, healthpathways and accessing PPE for GPs.

COVID vaccines will continue to roll out and eligibility criteria will continue to change. The COVID vaccine rollout has been a massive undertaking. More than half of Queenslanders have received a COVID vaccine at a General Practice.

Working with the team at AMA Queensland and Qld GP Alliance members has been a privilege. The Queensland representatives of these organisations have been working tirelessly advocating for their members and the community. AMA Queensland and the Qld GP Alliance are now also advocating against the continuation of the North Qld Pharmacy trial which will allow pharmacists to diagnose, treat and prescribe for 23 diseases including diabetes, asthma, hypertension, acne and psoriasis. This will put patient safety at risk and creates a conflict of interest for pharmacists selling the medications. This will affect many of us, including GPs, endocrinologists, dermatologists, cardiologists and respiratory physicians and it is essential we band together to ensure our patients are cared for by qualified doctors who have the necessary training.

We are now into another year of the pandemic. GPs, non-GP specialists, clinic staff and our hospital colleagues continue working long hours to care for the community, especially in areas that have been hampered by short staffing. Drs4Drs offers support to doctors and medical students. Call 1300 374 377 for 24/7, 365 days a year, confidential and free mental health support.

Meet the BLMA Committee

Committee Member – Dr Felicity Jensen

MBBS MHM CHIA AMA(M) FRSTMH FRSM
ACHSM FRACMA

Dr Felicity Jensen is the Deputy Director of Medical Services at the Logan Hospital and is currently on secondment to the Department of Health.

Dr Jensen has specialist qualifications as a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA).

Dr Jensen is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (UK) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (UK). She is an Associate Fellow of the Australasian College of Health Service Management.

Dr Jensen holds a Master of Health Management and is a Certified Health Informatician of Australasia.

She is the Deputy Jurisdictional Coordinator of Training for the joint Queensland and Northern Territory jurisdiction for the RACMA College.



*Dr Felicity Jensen
BLMA Committee Member*

New BLMA Committee Members

We welcome our new committee members, Doctors Andrew Cronin and Jennifer Schafer.

Dr Cronin is a retrieval physician and senior medical officer.

Dr Schafer is a general practitioner and Medical Director of Queensland Doctors' Health Programme.

Stay tuned for their bios in future editions of Synapse!



*Dr Andrew Cronin
Retrieval physician and senior
medical officer*



*Dr Jennifer Schafer
Medical Director of Queensland
Doctors' Health Programme*



Our new website is now live!

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*Dr Jennifer Schafer
Medical Director,
Doctors' Health in Queensland*

'Toxic Positivity in the Age of Covid'

*By Dr Jennifer Schafer,
Medical Director,
Doctors' Health in Qld*

Dr Ira van der Steenstraten, MD and Life Coach, Breeze Life Coaching, management committee DHQ "The health system is strong" said the NSW Premier, triggering a howl of outrage from healthcare workers.

The Covid pandemic has opened Pandora's box and exposed the weaknesses, flaws, and cracks in our political and healthcare systems.

Did Mr Perrottet's statement reflect genuine beliefs, insincere political rhetoric, a well-intentioned attempt to provide optimism for the masses, or deliberate misinformation? Or was it just another example of toxic positivity?

Toxic positivity is the act of focusing on positive things while ignoring or suppressing the negative, to the point of denying reality and rejecting difficult but authentic emotions such as sadness or anger.

Positivity is good for our wellbeing. Thinking positively and encouraging positivity can be useful. However, unrealistic positivity is harmful, particularly when it minimises,

trivialises, or denies experiences and emotions requiring compassion and empathy.

Acknowledging a negative reality is not the same as having a negative attitude. Working in healthcare, especially during the Covid pandemic, can be challenging. Statements such as 'our system is prepared and coping well', 'it's not that bad', or 'it could be worse', deny the lived experience and contradict the 'it's OK to not be OK' message from doctors' health advocates.

Emotions triggered include anger, cynicism, and even perceptions of being exploited. In a workforce shortage, this is not the way to motivate people who, after two long years of Covid, are feeling demoralised and exhausted. Predictable reactions include 'fight' – like the recent nurses' strike – or 'flight', with workers quitting their professions.

Protecting yourself from toxic positivity requires critical thinking skills. While the amygdala controls our emotional response, the rational pre-frontal cortex can be stronger.

Remind yourself that such statements are often well-intentioned, though ill-informed and insightful. Have a prepared response: 'Thank you for sharing your perspective. My experience based on (e.g., working on the frontlines in the clinic/hospital) ...is very different. If you are genuinely interested, perhaps we can discuss it at another time.' Treat yourself, your

colleagues, your patients and even your detractors with compassion – everyone is just a bit more irritable and fractious at present.

Personal resilience is a protective factor when faced with difficult circumstances, but the current situation is NOT due to a deficit of personal resilience. Healthcare systems also need to be resilient. A global pandemic is guaranteed to test the limits, with healthcare workers shouldering the burden when the system fails, often at significant personal cost.

Remember that true resilience means being aware of all your emotions, being able to focus and act on what you CAN control and making sure to address what needs to change. When working in healthcare it is often not possible to do this alone and you need to connect with others to make these changes happen.

Doctors' Health in Qld provides an independent, confidential, colleague-to-colleague support service for doctors and medical students – Call 07 3833 4352.



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The GP Psychiatry Support Line: A free hotline service

By Mike Bosel

General Practitioners (GPs) play a crucial role in looking after their patients' mental health, providing a vital link between consumers and comprehensive mental health services, and reducing hospitalisations and visits to the emergency department.

The GP Psychiatry Support Line is a free service provided by ProCare and funded by Brisbane South PHN to help GPs manage the care of mental health consumers. It's not about triaging or referring consumers to a psychiatrist, nor is it for emergency presentations. Instead, it's about keeping consumers whose conditions are able to be treated within primary care, under the care of their GP.

The GP Psychiatry Support Line will:

- ▶ Provide a telephone support line for all GPs within the catchment area that offers expert psychiatric advice for consumers.
- ▶ Reach out to GPs and help them register easily online as a once-off process.

Available from 9am to 5pm via 1800 16 17 18, the GP Psychiatry Support Line assists with diagnosis, investigation, medication management and safety planning. It was launched in response to GP feedback about the need for responsive psychiatry support that enables the best outcomes for consumers.

Since launching the GP Psychiatry Support Line across Brisbane south in 2021 we have seen an incredible uptake of the service, with 610 GPs having already registered for support and 105 support enquiries being made. The majority of GP

enquiries in our region are in support of consumers presenting with major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and anxiety.

Dr Michael Breakspear MBBS, FRANZCP is an adult general psychiatrist with a broad interest in mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, neuropsychiatry, ageing and addiction. He's also a Psychiatrist with the GP Psychiatry Support Line and a strong advocate for the service:

'I've been contributing to The GP Psychiatry Support Line as a consulting psychiatrist for approximately two years. The referrals from GPs are relevant, clinically insightful and at the appropriate level of expertise,' he said.

'As we are all aware, waiting times for patients to see a psychiatrist for assessment are typically 6 months or longer, a problem that has been highlighted nationally as evidence of a crisis in the sector. I believe the support line provides a vital clinical service to primary practice, improving the quality and efficiency of mental health care in primary care.

'Drawing on my clinical experience as a psychiatrist in the private and public sectors, the information I am able to give directly to GPs is frequently as relevant as what I am able to provide after an in-person review, which saves time through the GP's knowledge of the patient,' he explained.

'Based on my experience working with the support line, it is my opinion that the benefits to GPs, their patients and the mental health system as a whole cannot be overstated.'



Mike Bosel
Brisbane South PHN Chief
Executive Officer

Visit www.gpsupport.org.au for more information, email admin@gpsupport.org.au or ring 1800 16 17 18. All requests are responded to within 24 hours. The GP Psychiatry Support Line can help register GPs as a quick one-off process, and enables GPs to talk with a psychiatrist directly, or to book in a time that works for them. GPs also receive a summary of the discussion.

Brisbane South PHN puts people at the heart of health care. As a key health system driver, connector, integrator and innovator for the people of Brisbane south, our strategy maintains an unwavering focus on the people we serve. We proudly work to address health inequities and inequalities through the power of partnerships, to support the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for every person in our region.



PROPOSAL – AMA QUEENSLAND

COVID-19 COFFEE CORNER SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

AMA Queensland has successfully delivered the *Wellbeing at Work* (previously *Resilience on the Run*) program to doctors in training since 2015, with the aim of developing techniques for resilience and mindfulness, better managing interpersonal relationships, navigating difficult scenarios on the job and practical steps for asking for help. A total of 4,188 interns have completed the program with the overwhelming majority of survey respondents (83 per cent) rating it as excellent or good.

Now more than ever, all doctors need support in their workplace and to signal to them that their wellbeing is paramount. This effort also supports the sustainability of the workforce.

It is noted that our facilitator, Dr Ira van der Steenstraten previously worked in the Amsterdam mobile crisis team and has experience in this type of situation. Having a medically-trained facilitator with expertise in clinical psychiatry, coupled with peer participation in the sessions, to exchange stories and concerns about similar experiences, is a critical aspect in the success of our program.

PROPOSAL

AMA Queensland is now offering “**COVID-19 Coffee Corner**” sessions via online videoconferencing, focussing on wellbeing support for all doctors.

The sessions will run for 30-45 minutes with a maximum of 10 participants per session.

The current scheduling is Monday, Wednesday and Friday (one session each day) for a duration of up to three months.

Timing of sessions can be arranged based on suitable availability for your team e.g. 12-12.30pm, 4-4.30pm and/or 7-7.30pm.



PROPOSAL – AMA QUEENSLAND

COVID-19 COFFEE CORNER SESSIONS



FACILITATORS

These sessions will be jointly facilitated by Dr Ira van der Steenstraten, psychiatrist, life coach and experienced mindfulness trainer, and Vicky Dawes, prior counsellor and coach with the Queensland Doctors' Health Programme (QDHP).

Dr Ira van der Steenstraten

Dr Ira van der Steenstraten is trained as a psychiatrist, psychotherapist and family therapist at the University of Amsterdam and the Academic Medical Centre in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

She is currently working as a life coach at Breeze Life Coaching. Ira is an experienced mindfulness trainer, and has developed a number of innovative mindfulness and resilience programs for individuals and groups such as doctors, physiotherapists, families, teachers, schoolchildren and chronic pain patients.

She has over 20 years of experience working in various medical and therapeutic settings. At present she specializes in providing mindfulness and resilience training to adults and children.

Vicky Dawes

Vicky Dawes MBChB MCouns is a counsellor and former doctor with extensive experience supporting doctors and medical students both through her counselling private practice, and previously, through her work with Doctors' Health QLD where she provided one-on-one counselling support and also developed and delivered education sessions across a wide breadth of doctors' health topics.

CONTENT OF SESSIONS

COVID-19 Coffee Corner sessions will include psychoeducation and practical exercises, leaving participants feeling "lighter" than at the start of the session. The following is a general summary of what a session will look like:

- ▶ Introduction: 5 min max– basic rules (support, not treatment, asking questions via chat, referral pathways)
- ▶ 10-15 min – support for each other. Psychoeducation, normalising, grounding
- ▶ 15 min – know about beforehand, sleeping, eating, activities. 1-2 practical exercises

SIGN UP FOR THE SESSIONS

Participants will receive an email invitation to join the sessions and will be asked to pre-register. Participants will be able to email through specific topics they would like covered.

AMA Queensland will work with your nominated representative to promote the sessions and manage the number of participants. At the end of each session, we can share a file with pathway/referral details.

COST

Sessions	Cost
3 x 30-45 minute sessions (10 people each) per week	\$1,870 plus GST

CONTACT US

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*Dr Ian Hadwen
BLMA Secretary*

NLMA TO BLMA – Back from the brink

By Dr Ian Hadwen, Secretary (outgoing) BLMA

There was once a thriving Northside Local Medical Association, founded in 1992 with a membership in excess of three hundred.

There was once a less thriving Southside Local Medical Association, founded at about the same time. Disharmony arose early but the Association continued until spluttering to a halt about 10 years ago.

From about 2005 onwards, numbers attending NLMA dinner meetings were declining and there were suggestions that we, the NLMA, should follow suit.

It can be argued that it was the demise of the Southside Association that saved the NLMA.

The NLMA had continued a clinical component to their dinner meetings, and received sponsorship from drug companies and larger medical groups. This sponsorship, because of the small numbers attending (often less than twenty) covered the cost of the entire dinner.

A group of six to eight GPs from the Southside moderated by Dr Bob Taylor arranged via our then Treasurer Dr Graham McNally to attend our dinner meetings, in great part for the clinical education component. Less than half the group

ever became paid-up members of the NLMA, but this arrangement suited at the time.

Interest from Southside doctors increased, including from specialists. Throughout 2018, the Management Committee of Drs Bob Brown, Graham McNally, Paul Bryan and myself debated the issue of extending the NLMA's membership catchment to include Brisbane South, as far down as Logan.

At the Annual General Meeting of the NLMA held on 12 February 2019, a motion was passed to extend the membership area as described, and with that to change the association's name to the Brisbane Local Medical Association (BLMA).

The "Certificate of Incorporation on Change of Name" was issued on 8 July 2019.

From that time onwards, and under the influence of our President Brown, engagement with AMA Queensland became stronger, with a direct appeal by Dr Brown to Dr Dilip Dhupelia to assist in the working of the new BLMA once he had relinquished his onerous role as AMA Queensland President.

This Dilip has done throughout 2021, through his contacts increasing membership, especially amongst Southside doctors, as well as

engaging the younger generation of doctors on both sides of the River.

With numbers attending dinner meetings more than doubling (60 to 90 attendees), it is now rare to cover the cost of these meetings with one off sponsorship. The costs, therefore, need to be supplemented by membership fees.

Regrettably, interest in the new and larger BLMA by the original Southside GPs whose attendance at dinner meetings helped save the local medical association from collapse has waned. Hopefully, their interest can be rekindled.

It must be added that it was not only the interest from Southside doctors that saved the NLMA from extinction. Our struggles were supported, and assistance provided, by our northern neighbours, the members of the Redcliffe and District Medical Association (REDAMA), in particular by their President Dr Kimberley Bondeson. The REDAMA newsletter was provided electronically to the NLMA members and our President Dr Bob Brown contributed an article to each issue.

Many members of REDAMA are now also members of the BLMA. May this cross fertilisation be nurtured and past assistance not forgotten; may the cooperation continue.



Lets get back to the business of talking travel!

Have you been watching the amazing feats at the Winter Olympics, picturing yourself surrounded by powdery snow? Now that Australian's can plan and travel, for those who have missed a few ski season's it is time to start planning ahead for your fix!!

Whether you like to hit the slopes or just practice your Apres Ski Skills we have plenty of choices around the world. From exclusive lodges in the French Alps to basic lodges in the Aussie Ski Fields, we have something for all budgets.

ALL INCLUSIVE:

Perhaps an all-inclusive ski holiday at Club Med with options in Italy, France, China, Japan and Canada. 7 nights at Val Thorens Sensations in France from \$1920 per person twin share with lesson & lift passes as well as Food & drinks, WOW.

FAMILIES:

With over 7.5m of 100% genuine glorious snow each year, its easy to see where Big White gets its name from Family. One of Canada's largest Ski-i/Ski-out resort villages it has everything you will need, right on your door step. Activities Galore!

GLAMOUR:

Verbier, Switzerland has developed into a glamorous winter playground. There is no doubt it is an expensive resort, but the skiing is superb. High quality accommodation and phenomenal bars and restaurants. Loved by skiers and Apres Skiers alike. Share a once in a lifetime with family or friends at Richard Branson's 9 bedroom mountain retreat, The Lodge!

THE GEM:

Copper Mountain, neighbour to such famous skiing destinations as Vail and Aspen but far more intimate. Pedestrian-only villages offers the opportunity to walk to the restaurants as well the lifts from your accommodation. Great for an introductory level to skiing and snowboarding.

CLOSE TO HOME:

Niseko, Japan's number 1 resort offers something for everyone, and its in the our time zone! 4 Interlinked ski resorts offering think champagne powder snow. Great accommodation options, amazing food choices and plenty of varied ski opens including extensive night skiing.

EVEN CLOSER TO HOME:

While Australia is certainly not known for its snow, for a few months a year we can turn it on! Thredbo V's Perisher, which should you visit? Thredbo is higher, offers more choices of accommodation and a great alpine atmosphere, particularly important if its not all about skiing. Perisher however does offer great value for money. Some options are still available this winter but CALL NOW!

There are so many other amazing places, let us help you plan ahead and have something to look forward to.



**Contract Ros and Linda at Orbit
World Travel on 1300 262 885
or email travel@amaq.com.au**



MEDICAL CAREERS EXPO

2022



SATURDAY
26 MARCH
1pm – 5.30pm



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AMA QUEENSLAND INVITES YOU TO...

Network with your peers over drinks and nibbles while meeting a selection of Colleges, Hospitals, Private Operators and more regarding medical career opportunities and advice.

1pm – 3pm	Trade Expo
3pm – 3.45pm	Career Panel Session
3.45pm – 4.30pm	Trade Expo
4.30pm – 5.30pm	Networking Drinks & Canapés

Block out the afternoon, bring your colleagues and come along to the AMA Queensland's Medical Career Expo to see what your many options are as part of this wonderful and varying industry that is Medicine.

All doctors are encouraged to attend this event to learn about new opportunities throughout Queensland and to network with colleagues.

FREE
EVENT



REGISTER
TODAY

qld.ama.com.au/MedicalCareersExpo





*Prof Chris Perry OAM
AMA Queensland President*

AMA Queensland Update

qld.ama.com.au

PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

The year has begun at pace with major health care issues dominating the public domain and we have been representing members every step of the way. Just some of these issues include the surge in COVID-19 cases, revelations about a North Queensland pharmacy trial that risks patient safety, and our union partner, ASMOFQ (Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland) taking Queensland Health to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC).

Strong opposition to the North Queensland Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot

We are actively fighting the Queensland Government's proposal to expand the role of pharmacists through the *North Queensland (NQ) Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot*. It will deliver second-rate health care and has serious conflicts of interest.

Encouraging pharmacists to become de facto GPs and diagnose and treat a range of potentially serious health conditions – including prescribing and dispensing a range of medicines despite a lack of training – is a risk to public health.

GPs have on average 14 years of training. Pharmacists have four. Pharmacists are a key part of community health care and we collaborate with them every day, but they are not trained to diagnose and treat complex conditions.



*Dr Brett Dale
AMA Queensland CEO*



We have officially withdrawn from the steering group and will continue to vehemently oppose the implementation of the pilot.

Read our media statement here qld.ama.com.au/news/NQScope

COVID-19 Update

Any hopes the new year would bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic have been dashed by the spread of Omicron, which is proving to be more contagious yet less severe than previous strains of the virus. Coinciding with the border reopening, Omicron is now throughout Queensland and our GPs and hospitals are under more pressure than ever.

Fortunately, we have now passed 90 per cent of Queenslanders having received two doses of the COVID vaccine, booster shots are picking up pace, and children are now being vaccinated. Messaging on boosters is changing to help people understand we need to be up to date

with COVID vaccinations and AMA Queensland is continuing to talk about the importance of vaccinations in the media.

HealthDirect Australia has been managing the treatment of COVID cases in the community since mid-January. AMA Queensland and the Queensland GP Alliance remain concerned at the lack of communication to GPs and the community about how this works on the ground.

GPs must have a dedicated hotline to call for advice on how to escalate care should patients deteriorate quickly, and have access to escalation pathways for each Hospital and Health Service (HHS). So far, just one HHS has provided this information and we have written to Queensland Health and the Minister to address this issue so GPs can properly care for COVID patients.

GPs and their staff have played a critical role in managing the pandemic over the past two years, including the vaccination rollout. They are exhausted and fed up

with responses from all levels of government that put more pressure on practices without offering the right resources needed to carry out this vital work.

In mid-January, the Federal Government reinstated COVID-19 telehealth items and announced that nine million P2/N95 masks will be distributed to general practice over the next three months.

We understand that some non-GP specialists continue to be disadvantaged by the telehealth changes and are continuing to advocate on their behalf.

We have also worked to identify Queensland pathology providers who can provide priority COVID testing for GPs, non-GP specialists and health care workers.

You can see updated advice on our website qld.ama.com.au/news/priority-testing-doctor

We will continue to update members on all COVID-19 developments.



ASMOFQ stands up for members in QIRC

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our industrial relations partner, ASMOFQ (Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland), has been raising issues with Queensland Health regarding their COVID-19 response, safety for health care staff and workforce plans.

Last year, ASMOFQ successfully took Queensland Health to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) over the supply, access and fit-testing of PPE, and secured a commitment that no doctor would be forced to care for a patient without the appropriate PPE.

In January, ASMOFQ took Queensland Health back to the QIRC seeking fit-testing of all doctors who will be required to wear N95/P2 respirators, clear and timely information to staff regarding their requirements for COVID testing and workplace exposures, and special

paid leave where staff are required to isolate.

This year will see ASMOFQ representing members in negotiations on a new Medical Officers' Certified Agreement (MOCA 6).

Ramping Roundtable Action Plan

AMA Queensland's Ramping Roundtable released its five-point Action Plan in early December to resolve the problems plaguing the public hospital system, well before the Omicron wave.

The Action Plan calls for:

- ▶ 1,500 more hospital beds across the state
- ▶ employing and training enough staff to keep acute hospitals fully functional seven days a week, with extended hours
- ▶ keeping hospitals operating at below 90 per cent capacity to allow for surges

- ▶ detailed analysis of patient flow within hospitals, and

- ▶ supporting alternative ways for patients to enter hospitals instead of through emergency departments (EDs).

You can read the Action Plan at qld.ama.com.au/news/ramping-roundtable

Australia Day Honours

We are immensely proud of all AMA Queensland members recognised in the Australia Day Honours List.

Professor Alfred Lam and Dr Margaret Kay have been awarded Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia – the second highest award.

A further seven members, including Past AMA Queensland President Gino Pecoraro, have been recognised with a Medal (OAM).



CELEBRATING MEMBERS WHO HAVE REACHED 50 YEARS: (L-R) DRS KEITH MITCHELL, PETER COHN, PROF CHRIS PERRY, GARRY BUCHAN-HEPBURN, LYNN KENNEDY, WILLIAM WATTS, MICHAEL BRINER, MICHAEL GORDON AND DENNIS COSTIGAN

This recognition shows the extraordinary dedication that these AMA Queensland members have shown to their profession and their community.

Other members recognised with a Medal (OAM) are:

- ▶ Dr Marie-Frances Burke for services to medicine as an oncologist
- ▶ Dr Robert Edwards for service to medicine as a thoracic physician
- ▶ Dr Stephen Godfrey for service to medicine as an ophthalmologist
- ▶ Dr Bradley Murphy for service to community health
- ▶ Dr Deborah Simmons for service to medicine through a range of roles
- ▶ Dr Harry Stalewski for service to medicine as a paediatrician surgeon and urologist.

Read more on AMA Queensland recipients qld.ama.com.au/News/AustraliaDay

Workplace Relations Support

AMA Queensland's Workplace Relations Consultancy offers expert workplace relations (WR) and human resources (HR) services, with a suite of services from developing and implementing new policies and procedures through to handling disputes and claims.

We can help you with any WR or HR matter in your practice. We know that every practice is different with unique needs, staff and patients so we will tailor support to meet your specific requirements and budget.

We can also help you with new laws governing the conversion of employees from casual to permanent.

We are here to help you check your compliance, with template packs and instructions that give you the tools to make offers and grant or reject requests.

Contact our Workplace Relations today to find out more at workplacelrelations@amaq.com.au or **07 3872 2211**.

Celebrating Members

On 1 December, AMA Queensland celebrated members who had reached significant membership milestones: 50, 45, 40, 35, 30 and 25 years.

You can see the list of members at qld.ama.com.au/news/Membermilestone



qld.ama.com.au

Event Wrap Up

November 2021 Meeting

Our Christmas meeting was held at the Queensland Cricketers Club on 26 November 2021. We thank our sponsors for the evening – Qld Xray Services and Q4 Financial. We also thank the Queensland Cricketers Club for their hospitality. A great night was had by all!



DR RYAN SHULMAN
– QLD XRAY SERVICES



DR MO ALAM, DR SHAHAB DADBIN,
DR JAMES COLLINS, DR HASTHIKA ELLEPOLA,
DR DOUG ROCHE AND DR IAN WILLIAMS



KATHY PERRY PROF CHRIS PERRY, DR BERES WENCK,
DR JENNIFER SCHAFER AND DR ANITA GREEN



DR HASTHIKA ELLEPOLA, DR JAMES COLLINS AND DR ALLAN PHILLIPS



DR GRAHAM MCNALLY, DR DAVID PHILLIPS
AND DR GLEN SPROLES.



DR DILIP DHUPELIA
AND DR IAN WILLIAMS



DR JENNIFER SCHAFER, DR ANITA GREEN, DR BERES WENCK
AND DR PAUL WEST



CARMEL BROWN, DR BOB BROWN, PROF CHRIS PERRY
AND KATHY PERRY

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