



## Message from the BLMA President

*Dr Hasthika Ellepola*

We are proud to share the 18th edition of Synapse. Whether you are a long standing member or we have recently welcomed you to BLMA, your involvement strengthens our community.

Each issue of Synapse is designed to deliver practical, relevant and engaging content that reflects the realities of modern medical practice. We are grateful to our contributors, whose expertise and insights highlight challenges, spark innovation and offer meaningful guidance for colleagues across all stages of their careers.

Over the years, Synapse has grown in both readership and impact. Distributed in both print and electronic formats, it consistently attracts positive feedback, and we are proud of its role in connecting colleagues across specialties and stages of practice. As always, we welcome contributions from our members. If you have an idea for an article, or would like to see specific themes featured in future editions, please contact us at [info@brisbanelma.org](mailto:info@brisbanelma.org). Shared knowledge and collaboration strengthen our profession, and we value your input.

In recent months, BLMA has hosted two significant events that have furthered our commitment

to professional development and collegial engagement.

On 5 August 2025, we held the inaugural BLMA and Avant Medico-Legal Symposium at Factory 51. This important event featured two timely and insightful presentations:

- ▶ How AI Can Support Practices in Lowering Costs, Boosting Efficiency, and Enhancing Resilience – presented by Lena Walsh, Avant Practice Solutions
- ▶ Best Practice in Managing Medicare and Being Medicare Audit Ready – presented by Jessica Miller, Avant Law

Both sessions were highly relevant to the day-to-day realities of medical practice, and the quality of the presentations was matched by a highly interactive discussion during the Q&A sessions.

On 10 September 2025, BLMA hosted another well-received Doctors-in-Training Exclusive Education Event at The Glen Hotel. The program featured a dynamic panel discussion on leadership and medicine with Dr Chris Zappala, Dr Dinesh Palipana, and Dr Emily Moody; an inspiring presentation, *Navigating Healthcare, My Way*, delivered by Dr Maureen Dingwell; and practical financial guidance from Ms Kelly Hill of q4 financial.

We sincerely thank our key partners Mater, Avant and q4 financial for their ongoing support, which makes such events possible.

Our events remain in high demand, often reaching full capacity well before RSVP closing dates. To ensure you do not miss out, please mark your calendars for the following upcoming events:

- ▶ **14 October 2025 – Water's Edge**
- ▶ **28 November 2025 – The Greek Club**

We are thrilled to see continued growth in BLMA's membership base. Our community now spans a wide range of specialties and levels of experience, enriching our conversations and strengthening our collective knowledge. If you have colleagues who are not yet members, we warmly encourage you to invite them to join. For a modest annual subscription, members enjoy access to high-quality CPD events, engaging speakers, excellent meals, and invaluable networking opportunities—all while being part of a vibrant and supportive local medical association.

Thank you for your ongoing support of BLMA. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected medical community.

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## Issue 19 | 2025 Newsletter

**Content Deadline:**  
**Monday 3 November**

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

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

**Contact:** Dr Dilip Dhupelia  
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## Are You a Member?

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



[info@brisbanelma.org](mailto:info@brisbanelma.org)

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

**Directory form is available on the website.**

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## Your 2025 Management Committee



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Dr Hasthika Ellepola



**Vice President:**  
Dr Andrew Cronin



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Dr Holly Dignan



**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:****AMA Queensland ASADA  
Senior Doctor Conference  
and Step Down Registration***By Dr Geoffrey Hawson*

Dear Editor

I write to members of BLMA as the Vice President of both Australian Senior Active Doctors Association (ASADA) and the Redcliffe District Medical Association (RDMA). I wish to report on the third **Senior Doctor Conference** which was held at the Voco Hotel on August 9 this year, and to note my **call to action** by BLMA members.

The opening plenary on agism was delivered by Professor Nancy Pachana, a clinical geropsychologist from UQ which was well received. I then chaired a video session where I interviewed Commander Spindel (Deputy Commander of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) in the US). She answered many questions that had been put to her in advance from the organising committee. This is the first time we have had any input from the MRC. Fascinating how they use the retired health workforce and how they are structured across USA.

Another session was with Councillor Amelia Lorentson from Noosa Council. She had heard about the step-down registration category for retired Doctors from a GP on the Sunshine Coast and thought it important enough to consider taking a motion about step-down to the Local Government Association's

AGM this year. Unfortunately, it was not considered appropriate to include on their agenda, but she spoke passionately about the need for local government to be prepared for all and any emergencies to meet their community's needs.

QH Chief Medical Officer, Dr Catherine McDougall, spoke on workforce and wellbeing issues but did not address the step-down issue. There were multiple other sessions covering topics such as medical insurance (ROCS cover for retirees) and Avant's Travel Insurance Policies for members. Their travel insurance, with no age limit for members, is good enough for people to consider changing to Avant just for this.

There were sessions on finding meaning after retirement and a look at alternative careers. A session on transitioning out of practice was well received also. This was given by AMA Queensland Corporate Partners Cletcher and Neale and Hillhouse Legal.

There was a session on the need for physical activity given in an entertaining way with two highly qualified exercise physiologists from Zar Athletica. A networking drinks session was held before moving to dinner at Cucina Regina in the Star.

The next conference will be in two years in 2027.

**My call to action:** The concept of a step-down registration category has been dealt a death blow by the Medical Board of Australia and AHPRA. The only real hope is for doctors to lobby their Qld politicians and convince them that something needs to be done. Local Council could also be fertile ground to consider pilot programs for disaster management that might convince State Government to get on board. If Queensland were to legislate the new category, it would open the door for the other states to follow as Queensland is the lead state on health legislation. I encourage BLMA members reaching retirement age or now retired to join ASADA Inc. ([asada.asn.au](http://asada.asn.au)) as it is the only medical group lobbying for this change.

The only real hope is for doctors to individually lobby. Remember: "You don't form a Fire Brigade after the Fire". Government needs to be prepared but is definitely not!

Geoffrey Hawson

# 3 ways AI medical scribes can benefit your practice

By *Lena Wallish*



**Lena Wallish**  
Billings+ Manager & VBIT Manager,  
Avant

If you're like the 75% of Australian doctors experiencing burnout, using an AI medical scribe could help lighten your workload. The technology – which uses generative AI to automate the creation of clinical documents – promises to help reduce the admin burden doctors face. But the benefits can go far beyond saving time.

In this article, we'll explore the advantages of AI medical scribes and what you should consider when trying to choose one for your practice.

## How do AI medical scribes work?

You may be familiar with speech-to-text medical dictation software, which has been around for a few years. This type of software only offers a basic transcription of doctor-patient consultations, leaving doctors to manually edit, copy and format the text into clinical documents.

AI medical scribes go a step further. By using generative AI (similar to ChatGPT), they listen to consultations, extract clinically relevant information and automatically create detailed clinical documents (which still requires review and approval by the doctor).

There are several AI medical scribes on the market already. Avant Practice Solutions' has recently released another product called VoiceBox Scribe. It can produce clinical notes, letters, medical certificates and referrals – and can even be customised to create other documents.

## What are the benefits of AI medical scribes?

Despite its potential, AI tools like medical scribes remain underutilised in healthcare. Research by the RACGP found that 83% of GPs never or rarely use AI, and Avant's data revealed that only 11% of doctors use AI medical scribes. The technology, however, offers significant advantages. Here's how AI medical scribes can transform daily practice:

### Reduced admin and better work-life balance

Consider the countless hours you've spent writing consultation notes, letters and other documentation. Have you ever found yourself working late into the evening or sacrificing your weekend to catch up on this admin? An AI medical scribe can help take this burden off your plate. It can help you cut down on the significant

amount of unpaid admin you may be currently forced to perform.

### Enhanced patient care

AI medical scribes help doctors focus fully on their patients during consultations. Freed from typing notes, they can maintain eye contact and engage in meaningful conversations. As one doctor noted, "I even had a patient praise the fact that I could listen instead of type during the visit."

Locally, the RACGP's Health of the Nation 2024 report shared similar feedback:

"It enables me to look at the patient and have a great consultation," one GP said. "Their story unfolds naturally, and I no longer feel the need to interrupt for clarification. Medico-legally, my notes are more detailed. I am enjoying my work more since adopting this technology."

### More accurate, detailed documentation

Given they listen to an entire consultation and quickly extract the most relevant details, AI medical scribes can help produce more detailed clinical notes and documents. You can now create multiple documents using the same source data (i.e. the recorded

consultation). This eliminates the need to copy and paste notes, reducing many inaccuracies that can be caused by human error.

### What to look for in an AI medical scribe

Here are four qualities to look for when choosing a scribe for your practice:

#### 1. A reputable, tested solution

Not all AI scribes are built for healthcare. Those specifically designed for healthcare are trained on clinical data and capable of identifying medically significant information. However, even AI scribes designed for healthcare may pose quality or safety risks. Currently, AI scribes fall outside the Therapeutic Goods Administration’s regulatory framework for medical devices, leaving them without regulatory oversight.

It’s therefore important to seek a solution from a trusted provider with a product that is rigorously tested to help ensure it’s fit for clinical settings and compliant with data privacy legislation.

#### 2. Integrations with practice software

If an AI medical scribe doesn’t integrate with your existing systems – like your practice management or messaging platforms – you need to spend time manually transferring data between your scribe and these platforms. Choose a scribe able to be integrated with practice management solutions Best Practice, Bp VIP.net and Gentu, including one that connects with messaging platforms HealthLink and Medical-Objects, allowing you to send referral letters directly, eliminating the need for manual uploads.

#### 3. Customisation

Many AI scribes can only create a few types of documents, like referral letters or clinical notes, with no ability to customise output. Choose a scribe that offers customisable templates to automate the creation of documents you need.

#### 4. Cost-effectiveness

Many AI scribes require signing up for a monthly or annual subscription, which means no matter how much you use your AI scribe, you pay a flat rate. There are new alternate payment options to consider. For example Avant’s VoiceBox Scribe offers pay-per-use pricing, with an hourly fee. For some practices this flexibility could be a cost-efficient choice for practices of all sizes, helping to ensure you only pay for what you need.

## Are you a busy doctor bogged down by paperwork?



*VoiceBox Scribe* is the AI-powered medical assistant that captures your consults in real-time and turns them into structured clinical documents – helping to free up your time so you can focus on patient care.

### Get your first month for free

Looking for a reason to try VoiceBox? We’ve got one for you: your first month is on us\*.

\*Terms and conditions apply. Scan the QR code to view full details.



**Avant for practices**

Speak with our team to learn more

1800 010 236 | [practicesolutions@avant.org.au](mailto:practicesolutions@avant.org.au)



### Benefits

- Built to meet Australian privacy standards, with security engineered by Avant.
- Data is stored securely in Australia.
- Scribe works silently in the background – no typing or dictation needed.
- Quickly create medical certificates, clinical notes and referral letters – or customise to create other documents.
- Sync Scribe with your appointment book and your dictation list is ready when you are. No paperwork, no delays – Scribe can file directly into patient records!





## Brisbane North PHN & Metro North Health General Practice Liaison Officer (GPLO) – September 2025 Update

The Metro North GP Liaison Team have been busy over the past few months supporting general practice. To keep up to date with latest LOCAL health service updates, we encourage you to subscribe the weekly [Brisbane North PHN "GP Link" eNewsletter](#). The Metro North Health [Refer Your Patient](#) website also has useful resources for referring practitioners.



The weblinks in this article, can be accessed via the electronic Newsletter on your Medical Association website. To reach Metro North GPLO Program, please email us [mngplo@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:mngplo@health.qld.gov.au).

### GP Education Day – Gastroenterology & Hepatology – 25 October

The GPLO Program and Gastroenterology and Hepatology experts from Metro North Health

facilities have designed a focused, practical, CPD accredited education day specifically for GPs to enhance your clinical practice with evidence-based updates and interactive case discussions.

Key topics include:

- ▶ metabolic-associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD)
- ▶ polyp surveillance and management
- ▶ gastrointestinal bleeding
- ▶ high ferritin and its clinical implications
- ▶ gut microbiome and its role in health
- ▶ functional gut disorders
- ▶ gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD)
- ▶ inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

[Find out more and register.](#)



## More Specialist Advice Services to support GPs:

GPs across Metro North can access timely specialist advice for their patients via the following pathways which may help optimise their care in the community, and eliminate the need for a specialist face-to-face outpatient consultation and the wait to be seen.

We encourage GPs to explore these options for appropriate patient care.

- ▶ GP Smart Referrals Written Request for Advice (GPSR RFA), which is available for **Neurology, Urology, General Medicine, Paediatrics, Persistent Pain and Rheumatology**, with further information about referral criteria available via the [Metro North Clinical Advice Line \(CAL\)](#). Additional specialties are coming onboard soon and there are additional phone advice services available via the CAL website.

**How to Send an RFA** - The online [RFA advice guide](#) describes how to send a written RFA in GP Smart Referrals.

If you need assistance accessing GP Smart Referrals (GPSR), contact [gpsr@brisbanenorthphn.org.au](mailto:gpsr@brisbanenorthphn.org.au)

- ▶ [Mater e-Consultant Program](#), which will now be delivered from Monday 15 September 2025 via ConsultMed Digital Platform, is available for other specialties including Endocrinology, Cardiology, Respiratory and Sleep, Dermatology, Obstetric Medicine and Haematology. Find out more about the service and ConsultMed by [registering to attend an informative webinar](#) on Wednesday 15 October 2025 from 6pm.

## 1. Metro North Rheumatology Request for Advice (RFA)

GPs can now send a written Request for Advice from a Metro North

Health rheumatologist via the GP Smart Referral (GPSR) *Request Advice* button (provided within five working days).

**This service is for patients who are not a current rheumatology outpatient** eg new/unknown or discharged from rheumatology outpatient AND living within catchment of any of the Metro North Health Hospitals.

Note: For **current rheumatology patients**, advice should instead be sought from their treating team by either:

- ▶ contacting the treating team's Registrar via hospital switchboard, or
- ▶ written enquiry via the *Update Request* function in GPSR (preferred), or other usual referral method.

## 2. National GP Psychiatry Support Line

The GP Psychiatry Support Line is designed to address a critical gap in care, helping GPs manage complex mental health cases, particularly in areas where psychiatric support is difficult to access. **By calling 1800 16 17 18**, GPs are connected directly with psychiatrists who can offer their expert advice regarding the mental health needs of the patients.

More information is available [online](#).

## RSV immunisation reduces infant disease burden – New resources for GPs

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is the leading cause of infant hospitalisation in Australia. In 2024, more than 12,000 infants were hospitalised with severe RSV in Australia. In 2024, Queensland launched a phased Paediatric RSV Prevention Program, beginning with a monoclonal antibody for infants in April and expanding to include an antenatal vaccine by December.

During the 2024 rollout, [hospitalisations among infants under six months halved](#) compared to the same period in 2023. So far in 2025, infant hospitalisations have fallen by 75 per cent compared to the same time in 2023. This represents 955 fewer infants hospitalised due to RSV since the program began.

Vaccine service providers can find out more about providing RSV immunisations to their patients and in their communities [via Queensland Health](#), or by downloading the [immunisation provider toolkit](#).

**The respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine is now available for free under the National Immunisation Program to people who are 28 to 36 weeks pregnant.**

Getting vaccinated during pregnancy is a safe and effective way to protect young babies from severe RSV. The following resources have been developed for health professionals and vaccine providers to share with patients:

- ▶ a [community campaign kit](#), a [video](#) where health experts explain maternal vaccines.
- ▶ a [case study video](#) – a mother speaks about her daughter's experience with RSV and the importance of being vaccinated.

## HealthPathways

Login at: [brisbanenorth.communityhealthpathways.org](https://brisbanenorth.communityhealthpathways.org) or phone 07 3630 7300 for login details.

**New HealthPathways** detailing recent Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) related changes are now live, including: [MyMedicare](#), [Chronic Condition Management \(CCM\) items](#) and [Guide to MBS items](#).

**New clinical Pathways:** [Lung cancer screening](#) and [Suspected lung cancer](#).



Queensland X-Ray Proudly Delivering Australia's

# NATIONAL LUNG CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Queensland X-Ray is playing a key role in delivering the Australian Government's first-ever National Lung Cancer Screening Program (NLCS), launched on 1 July 2025.

Through the NLCS, Queensland X-Ray practices across Greater Brisbane are providing low-dose CT (LDCT) scans at no cost to eligible high-risk patients.

Lung cancer screening is a quick, non-invasive procedure that uses low-dose CT imaging to detect lesions and signs of cancer before symptoms appear. Research has shown that LDCT scans can detect lung cancer at its earliest stage, when it is most treatable.

**Dr Sanjay Dhupelia, Queensland X-Ray Radiologist, said:** "The National Lung Cancer Screening Program gives at-risk Australians access to critical, potentially life-saving screening. We're proud to be delivering this vital screening service as part of a nationwide push to help detect lung cancer earlier and improve patient outcomes."

**Patients are eligible for the program if they\*:**

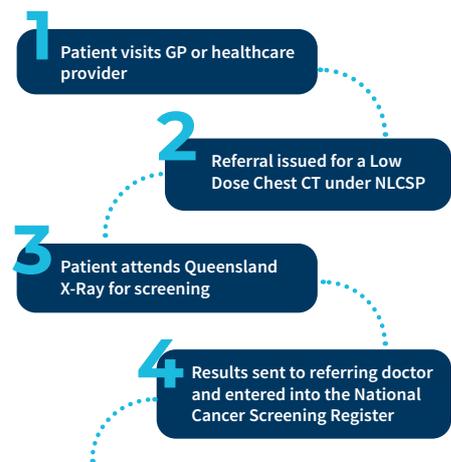
- ▶ are aged between **50 and 70 years**
- ▶ show **no signs or symptoms** of lung cancer
- ▶ have a history of **at least 30 pack-years** of cigarette smoking and are either a **current smoker** or **quit within the past 10 years**

\*For full eligibility criteria, visit [www.health.gov.au/our-work/nlcs](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/nlcs)

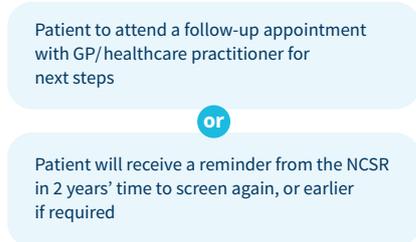
Program participants will require a referral from their GP/healthcare practitioner to undergo screening. Imaging will be performed by our expert team using advanced low-dose CT technology and analysis systems.

As a participating provider, Queensland X-Ray is committed to delivering high-quality imaging services, ensuring that eligible Australians have access to the best possible diagnostic care.

## How screening works



## Depending on the results



## Our services

- |            |                           |                           |                |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| MRI        | Bone Mineral Densitometry | Interventional Procedures | NLCS           |
| CT         | Nuclear Medicine          | Women's Imaging           | Sports Imaging |
| Ultrasound | Cardiac Imaging           | Pregnancy Imaging         | Dental Imaging |
| X-ray      |                           |                           |                |

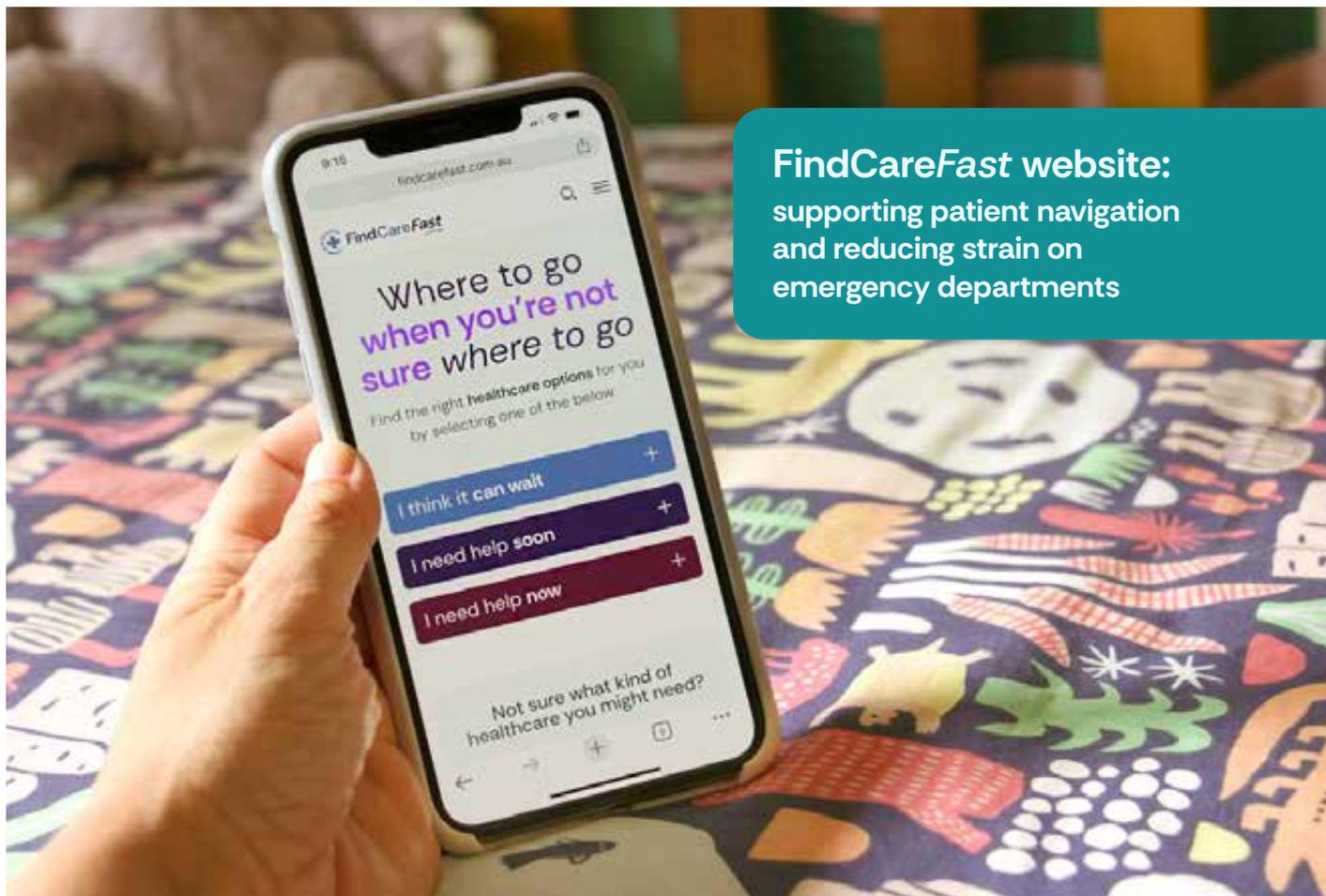


For more information on services and locations, visit our online Billing Guide [qldxray.com.au/billing-guide](http://qldxray.com.au/billing-guide)

For fast and direct access to Queensland X-Ray, Please call our Referrer Help Desk on **1800 77 99 77**

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[qldxray.com.au](http://qldxray.com.au)



**FindCareFast** ([findcarefast.com.au](http://findcarefast.com.au)) is a user-friendly online service navigation tool designed to help residents of Greater Brisbane make informed decisions about their healthcare options.

Whether your patients are searching for after-hours GP clinics, pharmacies, mental health services, or allied health professionals, FindCareFast provides a clear and convenient starting point that empowers patients to locate appropriate care quickly and easily.

Developed by Brisbane North PHN and Brisbane South PHN in collaboration with Metro North and Metro South Hospital and Health Services, FindCareFast is designed to be user-friendly, accessible, and available 24/7.

The platform places critical healthcare resources at your patients' fingertips, accessible via both mobile and desktop devices.

**Key features:**

- **Integrated decision support:** seamlessly connects users to Healthdirect, Australia's online Symptom Checker tool, and the13 HEALTH phoneline, to help guide patient decision-making on where to seek care.
- **Accessible design:** consumer-friendly language and built-in translation tools support patients with low English literacy.
- **After-hours mode:** directs users to healthcare services available outside regular business hours.
- **First Nations healthcare options:** the website Moblink, a dedicated resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

# 2025 better OUTCOMES MEDICAL CONFERENCE

EXPERIENCE A MEDICAL  
CONFERENCE LIKE  
NO OTHER



“Every speaker was outstanding. Exceeded expectations - the quality is what I get at international conferences!”

*Dr Yates, GP, Robina*

The 2025 Better Outcomes Conference brought together leading medical specialists, allied health professionals, and personal injury lawyers for a truly multidisciplinary event dedicated to advancing patient-centred care and strengthening collaboration across specialties. Highlights included an interview with Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM, interactive expert-led sessions, live demonstrations of the pioneering BioSpine Project, and a mock courtroom examination. Delegates left with new connections, shared insights, and practical strategies to achieve better outcomes for their patients and communities.



Interested in joining us as an expert speaker, delegate or sponsor for the the 2026 Better Outcomes Medical Conference? Simply scan the QR code to register your interest.





## Update on Pneumococcal vaccines on childhood immunisation schedule

ATAGI has undertaken a review of pneumococcal vaccines on the current childhood immunisation schedule. Resultant changes have been made to the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

From Monday 1 September 2025, Prevenar 20 will be introduced into the NIP to replace Prevenar 13 and Pneumovax 23. The introduction of Prevenar 20 simplifies the childhood vaccine schedule, reduces the number of doses and covers more strains of the disease.

From 1 September, children under five years:

- ▶ who have not yet started pneumococcal schedule should receive three doses of Prevenar 20
- ▶ who have previously received one or two doses of Prevenar 13 should receive Prevenar 20 for all subsequent doses to complete the recommended vaccination course (where required)
- ▶ who have already completed a Prevenar 13 vaccination course and who are due for a Pneumovax 23 booster should receive one dose of Prevenar 20 instead.

All First Nations children will receive four doses.

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# Upcoming changes to bulk billing incentives in General Practice

Taken from Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

[www.health.gov.au/our-work/upcoming-changes-to-bulk-billing-incentives-in-general-practice](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/upcoming-changes-to-bulk-billing-incentives-in-general-practice)

## What is changing from 1 November 2025

There are 2 parts to the upcoming changes to Bulk Billing Incentives in General Practice, from 1 November 2025:

1. Expanding eligibility for Medicare bulk billing incentives.
2. Introducing the Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program (BBPIP).

## Why it is important

Making all Australians eligible for Medicare bulk billing incentive payments will support doctors to continue to bulk bill their patients, improving access to general practice care for all Australians.

## Medicare bulk billing incentive payments changes

From 1 November 2025, all Medicare-eligible patients will be eligible for bulk billing incentives.

Medicare pays a bulk billing incentive when a medical practitioner bulk bills an eligible patient for an eligible service. This is to support GPs to bulk bill their patients.

The value of Medicare bulk billing incentives depends on the service provided and the location.

Medicare bulk billing incentives are scaled and increase in regional, rural and remote communities, as determined using the Modified

Monash Model location classification. Bulk billed items are scaled approximately as follows:

- ▶ Modified Monash 2 locations – 150% of value of bulk billed items in metro locations (Modified Monash 1)
- ▶ Modified Monash 3-4 locations – 160%
- ▶ Modified Monash 5 locations – 170%
- ▶ Modified Monash 6 locations – 180%
- ▶ Modified Monash 7 locations – 190%

Bulk billing incentive payments are currently available under the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) to medical practitioners that bulk bill:

- ▶ children under 16 years of age and
- ▶ patients with a Commonwealth concession card.

## The new Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program

From 1 November 2025, the Australian Government will support thousands of general practices to bulk bill every patient, with the launch of the new Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program (BBPIP).

Practices participating in BBPIP will receive an additional quarterly 12.5% incentive payment on every \$1 of MBS benefit paid from eligible services, split evenly between the GP and the practice. The even BBPIP payment split recognises the roles played by both practices and providers in delivering bulk billed services to patients.

Participating practices must bulk bill every eligible service for every patient, to receive the incentive payment. This incentive payment will be in addition to MBS benefits paid (including bulk billing incentives).

To participate in BBPIP, practices will need to:

- ▶ Bulk bill all eligible services
- ▶ Promote their participation in BBPIP as Medicare Bulk Billing Practices
- ▶ Be MyMedicare registered (note that practices that are not already MyMedicare registered and wish to participate in BBPIP will be exempt from MyMedicare accreditation requirements).

To register in BBPIP, practices will need to:

1. register to participate in MyMedicare
2. register to participate in BBPIP via MyMedicare.

Registration for BBPIP will be available from 1 November 2025.

Accredited practices can prepare in advance, by registering for MyMedicare now. Instructions on how to register for MyMedicare are available on the Services Australia Health Professional Education Resources website.

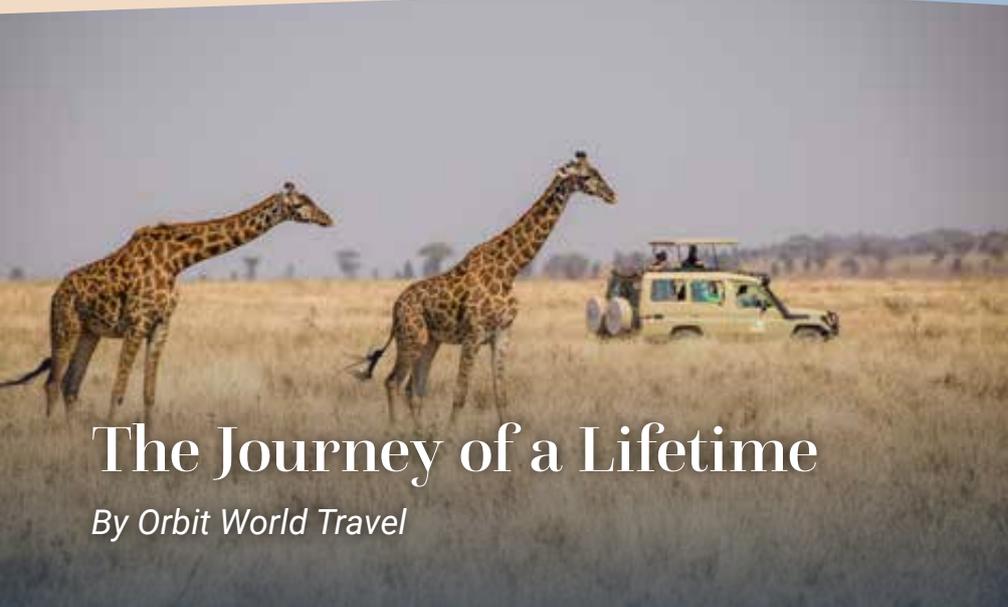
Further details and instructions on how to register in BBPIP will be provided later this year.

We have developed a resource answering frequently asked questions about BBPIP for practices, providers, practice managers and health professionals, including eligibility, benefits and how the program operates.

Also see the Webinar recording "Understanding bulk billing changes for GPs and Practices"

[www.health.gov.au/our-work/upcoming-changes-to-bulk-billing-incentives-in-general-practice](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/upcoming-changes-to-bulk-billing-incentives-in-general-practice)





## The Journey of a Lifetime

By Orbit World Travel

A safari through Kenya and Tanzania is not just about seeing animals – it's about connecting deeply with nature, understanding the complexities of conservation, and experiencing cultures that have thrived in harmony with their environment for centuries.

This luxury journey offers the perfect balance of adventure, education, comfort, and soul-stirring beauty. It's the kind of trip that changes you – the kind of journey where Africa gets under your skin and stays in your heart long after the dust of the savannah has settled.

### Exploring Eastern Africa: A Luxury Safari Through Kenya and Tanzania

Eastern Africa is home to some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes, ancient cultures, and extraordinary wildlife. A journey through Kenya and Tanzania isn't just a vacation – it's an immersion into the cradle of civilization, offering rare and unforgettable experiences that stir the soul and spark a deep appreciation for nature.

For travellers seeking the ultimate African adventure, a curated safari through Kenya and Tanzania promises luxury, authenticity, and intimate encounters with Africa's untamed beauty.

### A Journey Through Two Iconic Safari Destinations

The journey begins in Nairobi, Kenya's bustling capital, where travellers are welcomed with warm hospitality and spend their first nights at The Emakoko, a family-owned lodge located on the edge of Nairobi National Park. Giraffes, zebras, and even lions roam nearby, setting the tone for the thrilling days ahead.

From Nairobi, guests enjoy a guided day tour of some of the city's most iconic attractions, including the Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage, the Karen Blixen Museum, and the Giraffe Centre – all dedicated to wildlife conservation and education. These experiences provide a powerful context for the days that follow and highlight Kenya's commitment to preserving its natural heritage.

### The Majesty of Mount Kilimanjaro and Amboseli

The safari continues south to Amboseli National Park, where the Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge provides panoramic views of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain. The park is renowned for its herds of elephants and dramatic landscapes, with acacia trees silhouetted against the snow-



capped peak of Kilimanjaro. Morning and afternoon game drives allow travellers to witness this remarkable ecosystem up close, where wildlife roams freely against one of the continent's most iconic backdrops.

### Into Tanzania: Craters, Camps, and the Serengeti

Crossing into Tanzania, the journey shifts to the lush highlands and crater-filled landscapes of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Accommodations at Lions Paw Camp offer sweeping views of the Ngorongoro Crater, home to one of the most concentrated areas of wildlife in Africa. Here, luxury meets adventure in comfortable tents that blend seamlessly with the surrounding wilderness.

From there, travellers head into the legendary Serengeti National Park, staying at the tranquil and immersive Sound of Silence Serengeti Camp. Known for its vast plains and abundant wildlife, the Serengeti offers world-class game viewing, especially during the Wildebeest Migration, a natural spectacle often described as one of the greatest wildlife events on Earth. Guests enjoy intimate encounters with lions, leopards, cheetahs, and countless grazing animals, all while experiencing the raw beauty and silence of the African wilderness.

### Final Stop: The Masai Mara Connection

The safari culminates in Kenya's famed Masai Mara, with a stay at Kichwa Tembo Tented Camp, nestled in the forested Ololoolo Escarpment. With sweeping views of the savannah, the camp provides a luxurious setting for reflection and final game drives. It's a fitting end to the adventure, bringing the journey full circle with opportunities to visit local Masai villages and deepen understanding of East Africa's vibrant cultures.

### Seamless Comfort and Luxury in the Wild

What sets this safari apart is the seamless blend of comfort and wilderness. Each lodge and camp is carefully selected for its unique setting, world-class amenities, and proximity to key wildlife viewing areas. Whether it's sipping a drink while watching elephants from your veranda

or dining under the stars after a thrilling game drive, guests experience Africa without sacrificing comfort.

Accommodations range from boutique lodges like The Emakoko and Four Points by Sheraton Arusha to luxury tented camps such as Sound of Silence and Kichwa Tembo. Each destination offers something special – from elegant rooms with sweeping views to eco-friendly tents in remote locations that allow guests to fall asleep to the sounds of nature.

### Optional Extensions: Rwanda and Zanzibar

For those looking to extend their journey, Rwanda and Zanzibar offer unforgettable add-ons. Rwanda invites travellers into the lush jungles of Volcanoes National Park, where treks to observe mountain gorillas and chimpanzees in their natural habitat are among the most moving wildlife experiences in the world.

Alternatively, the tropical island of Zanzibar, off the Tanzanian coast, provides a relaxing beach escape. With its rich history, vibrant culture, and UNESCO-listed Stone Town, Zanzibar is more than just sun and sand – it's a cultural journey in itself.

If you are looking for your next unique destination to fulfil your travel dreams, think Africa.

Contact Ros or Karen



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## Focus on mental health support and suicide prevention

### 2025 AMA Queensland Foundation Social Cause

The AMA Queensland Foundation Board has announced its focus for fundraising for the remainder of 2025 will be in improving access to mental health support and suicide prevention for Queenslanders.

Following results of the recent survey Queensland Doctors Identifying Health Needs the Foundation has identified this as a cause particularly close to the hearts of doctors. The majority of those surveyed indicating mental health and suicide prevention as a preferred area of focus. Doctors highlighted this as an area of greatest concern for them, with survey respondents describing the issues as an "epidemic" and a "critical

issue in our communities" that is becoming "inaccessible for the most vulnerable."

Together, we can increase our ability to save lives

All funds raised for the remainder of 2025, including our Christmas Appeal, will go to supporting this vital cause. Our goal is to raise awareness along with critical funds that support key services, with a focus on identifying those groups who are underserved or vulnerable, so that funds for both mental health support and suicide prevention can be steered where there is greatest demand.

*"Nobody wants to lose a patient to suicide, and nobody wants to lose a colleague, but sadly, we do experience this in the community as doctors."*

Dr Dilip Dhupelia,  
Chair AMA Queensland Foundation.

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Dr Nick Yim  
AMA Queensland President



Dr Brett Dale  
AMA Queensland CEO



[amaq.com.au](http://amaq.com.au)

*AMA Queensland*

## Latest wins: President and CEO update

**September 2025**

We're continuing to push our Workforce Action Plan to government and in the media; while our Resident Hospital Health Check survey is the best way for doctors in training to give us insight into their needs.

A hearty thank you to all members who have updated their log-in details as part of our website and database upgrade.

If you're having trouble making the switch, there is a wealth of information online, and our team is ready to assist if needed.

[More information here](#)



### Advocacy Efforts

#### *Workforce plan*

Spring began with a positive meeting with Health Minister Tim Nicholls about our Workforce Action Plan.

This blueprint offers practical, profession-led solutions to our medical workforce crisis, and we believe its recommendations should be incorporated into the state government's own needs-based workforce strategy.

Minister Nicholls confirmed Queensland Health will cover many common themes as part of its current gap analysis, which will identify where there is undersupply and any maldistribution in medical training and skills.

The Minister also expressed enthusiasm for cultural change in hospitals, particularly addressing sources of tension between older and younger doctor cohorts, as well as between doctors and administrators, and medical and non-medical staff.

Minister Nicholls and Director-General Dr David Rosengren also briefed us on the work Queensland Health is doing with Surgery Connect, incentives for getting clinicians to regional and rural areas, and increasing specialist training places.

## **Medicinal cannabis prescribing**

We were fortunate to have more time with the Minister to discuss current problems with medicinal cannabis prescribing, along with colleagues from RANZCP, RACGP and the Pharmacy Guild.

AMA Queensland has spearheaded the national conversation about the risks associated with over-prescribing, incorrect prescribing and the dangerous levels of THC in some of these medications.

Our members have reported an increase in patients presenting to emergency departments with psychosis after taking these substances, despite having no previous history of mental illness.

There is a concern some parts of the industry are putting profits over patient safety.

Minister Nicholls confirmed he is seeking to have the issue placed on the agenda for the next meeting of federal, state and territory health ministers.

It would be a terrific outcome for our advocacy work to have Queensland sponsor a nation-wide push for stronger regulations. We will continue our efforts to ensure medicinal cannabis does not become a greater harm than good.

## **Resident Hospital Health Check**

Right now, AMA Queensland and ASMOFQ team members are visiting hospitals to promote our respected yearly survey, the Resident Hospital Health Check.

This poll gives us incredible insight into the working life of junior doctors in our public hospitals. We compile the results into a report which always attracts media coverage, giving important air time to the issues that matter to you.

You can do the survey [right now](#) to make your voice heard.



## **News**

### **MOCA 7 update**

The result of the ASMOFQ ballot has been finalised, with the majority voting in favour of the offer. Accordingly, ASMOFQ has provided in-principle agreement to the Director-General, and will work with Queensland Health to finalise the drafting of the new agreement.

Once completed, this proposed new agreement will be sent around for consultation and review, after which a second ballot of all junior and senior medical officers working for Queensland Health will be conducted.

If the proposed agreement is approved by a majority, it will then be submitted to the QIRC for certification, upon which it will become operational.

AMA Queensland and ASMOFQ ask you to update your details by contacting our Membership Team on 07 3872 2222 or [membership@amaq.com.au](mailto:membership@amaq.com.au).

### **Vaccines**

Queensland Health has reported amazing results from its Paediatric RSV Prevention Program.

Launched in April 2024, the program has seen more than 67,000 Queenslanders, including children and pregnant women) immunised against Respiratory Syncytial Virus.

Queensland Health indicates this equates to more than 1000 babies under six months of age avoiding hospitalisation.

This shows the power of vaccination programs and helps in our ongoing support of them.

## **Events**

### **Senior Doctor Conference**

This event saw its biggest turnout yet, with more than 100 people enjoying a day of information and networking on the theme "Facing the Future – Together".

Topics included ageism, medical reserve models, finding meaning and connection after retirement, innovations and strategies in wellness and cognitive vitality in later life, and looking at alternative careers beyond the stethoscope. Practical tips for transitioning out of practice, protecting your legacy, run off medical indemnity cover, travel insurance and keeping fit were also on the agenda.

Speakers included Professor Nancy Pachana, Professor Genavieve Dingle, Professor John Pearn OAM and Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Catherine McDougall. It was a wonderful day of connection and conversation between colleagues and friends.

### **Member Milestones**

AMA Queensland wouldn't exist without its members, and so it is always a delight to honour those who have been with us throughout their careers.

Our Member Milestone breakfast on 28 August honoured 20, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 year members.

A special congratulations to the members who've been with us for five decades: Dr Bruce Chater OAM, Dr Noela Whitby AM, Dr Desmond (Brian) Misso, Dr Rob Hodge, Dr Zelle Hodge AM, Dr Esther Andrews, Dr John Knott and Dr Wendy Moody.

### **Upcoming Events**

Our Women in Medicine Brisbane breakfast is coming up on 30 October at Victoria Park. Our theme this year is #AccleratedAction for gender equality, and we'll be celebrating women supporting fellow women and our allies as we work together to make that a reality. Keynote speaker AMA Queensland Vice President Dr Emilia Dauway will host a panel discussion with a range of inspiring doctors.



# Event Wrap Up

## August

The inaugural Avant and BLMA Medico-Legal Symposium was held on 5 August 2025 at Factory 51, Coorparoo. The event was a great success, drawing a strong turnout and an engaged, interactive audience.

Guest speakers included:

- ▶ Lena Walsh (Avant Practice Solutions) with her insightful presentation “How AI can support practices in lowering costs, boosting efficiency, and enhancing resilience.”
- ▶ Jessica Miller (Avant Law), who delivered an informative session on “Best practice in managing Medicare and being Medicare audit ready.”

Both presentations were informative, thought-provoking, and prompted valuable audience engagement.

We extend our sincere thanks to Avant for their sponsorship and support in delivering a successful and impactful event.



## DiT Event

The **Future in Focus** Doctors in Training event provided an opportunity for professional development and reflection on the evolving landscape of medicine. The program featured a panel discussion on leadership and medicine with Dr Chris Zappala, Dr Dinesh Palipana and Dr Emily Moody.

Dr Maureen Dingwell delivered an insightful presentation titled “Navigating Healthcare, My Way” and Kelly Hill of q4 financial, offered practical guidance on financial management for doctors in training.



# Advertising Kit 2025

The Brisbane Local Medical Association’s Newsletter Synapse is a bi-monthly publication.

## DISTRIBUTION

- ▶ Circulated to specialists, GPs, Private and Public Hospitals, allied health workers, practice managers, retired doctors, Public or Private Sector Doctor, Doctors in Training and GP Registrars throughout the Greater Brisbane Region.
- ▶ All newsletters are uploaded to the BLMA website which attracts strong traffic – brisbanelma.org

## NEWSLETTER

- ▶ Electronic and printed copies are distributed.
- ▶ Each edition is between 20 and 28 pages.
- ▶ All content is to be approved by the editor.
- ▶ Advertising guidelines apply.
- ▶ Please see Newsletter for frequency for content due deadlines and distribution dates.

If you are interested in advertising in SYNAPSE please contact:

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## NEWSLETTER FREQUENCY 2025

Month	Content Due	Distribution
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## CLASSIFIEDS

All classifieds are subject to the Editor’s discretion.

- ▶ No charge to current BLMA members.
- ▶ Non-members: \$100.
- ▶ Word count no more than 120 words.

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