



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

MEDICAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NSW-ACT

mbansw.org.au

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The Medical Benevolent Association of NSW–ACT acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

OUR MISSION

We support the medical community in NSW and the ACT by providing professional counselling, case management, information, referral, advocacy and financial assistance to doctors and their families. We aim to support their timely recovery from significant life challenges or adversity. We also provide preventative services that are aimed at improving doctors' health and well-being.

WE BELIEVE

A request for help does not imply weakness or failure.

All members of the medical profession should have access to appropriate assistance if needed, regardless of the reason.

Assistance should be aimed at independence rather than dependence.

Privacy and confidentiality of those who seek our assistance is paramount.

Doctors' well-being is a key enabler to quality patient care and healthier communities.

OUR VALUES



COMPASSION



EMPATHY



ACCESSIBILITY



RESPONSIVENESS



TIMELINESS

"Can I say how much I appreciate the time and space you have given me to talk and debrief. Talking openly about myself and my problems is not easy for me... but I think it was related to trusting your judgment & empathy. In Judaism the concept of mitzvah is very strong—the good deed or thought that is done without any expectation of reward, except the doing of same. That is what I feel you have done for me. I thank you for it extensively."

— RURAL SPECIALIST, NSW

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



I am privileged to present this report for the financial year ended 30th June 2023. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr Chris Dalton, our outgoing President, for his dedication, commitment, and contribution over the past 22 years. Chris, your leadership was invaluable, and we thank you for your tireless efforts.

COUNCIL UPDATE

I am pleased that Dr Felix Choi has been appointed as Vice President. We also have welcomed three new Councillors: Dr Natalie Klees (replacing Dr Helen Freeborn) and Dr Tony Joseph AM (replacing Dr Mark Selikowitz). We thank both Helen and Mark for their contributions and look forward to Natalie and Tony's involvement. We also welcomed back Dr Antonio di Dio in July 2023, who lives and works in the ACT. His inclusion, as well as our recent rebranding to include ACT, reflects our ongoing commitment to the doctors of the ACT, as well as NSW.

OUR WORK / TRENDS

As we look back on the past year, there continues to be a challenging work and economic environment for doctors. The increasing number of doctors seeking assistance, often citing financial difficulties, underscores the need for MBA NSW-ACT's support. In 2022-2023 we provided services to 234 doctors, making it a record year.

A significant shift this year has been our movement into more preventative work. This has yielded positive outcomes in terms of raising awareness and reducing the number of doctors returning for assistance. We have also observed more doctors choosing to seek help directly, rather than being referred by a colleague or workplace. Furthermore, we are heartened to note an increase in family members referring either themselves or the physician in their life.

This year, financial difficulties was cited by 30% as the main reason for seeking assistance. However, it is important to recognise that underlying these financial stressors are often many complex issues, including mental and physical health problems, relationship breakdowns and workplace issues.

Another 19% cited natural disasters and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 as their primary reasons for seeking assistance. These events continue to have long-term consequences, as do the increasing number of doctors reporting burnout and workplace stress.

General Practitioners now represent 54% of our caseload. This reflects the increasing challenges faced by GPs in both rural and urban settings. There has also been a steady increase in practicing doctors seeking help, now accounting for 68% of our caseload, up from 50% just four years ago. Another trend over the past 12 months is that more mid-career doctors are requiring support, whereas last year we saw more junior doctors.

FUNDING

Due to market forces, our investment income has experienced a decline of over 60% since 2019. Despite this decline, we have been able to increase our program delivery by 75% and beneficiary gifts by 27% in the same period. This has been achieved thanks to strong fundraising and operational guidance from our Executive Officer, who has managed to introduce other income streams and contain our operating costs, enabling us to report a small operating surplus each year.

Another highlight this year, was obtaining our first NSW Government (Department of Communities and Justice) Grant for \$100,000 to assist doctors severely impacted by the Northern NSW Floods. The positive impact our work had in this devastated area, as reflected in their testimonials, is truly heartwarming.

THANKS

I must take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of Louise Fallon, our Executive Officer and our amazing Social Workers, Juliet Kwiet and Alex Wood. They are the engine room of the MBA NSW-ACT, and their unwavering commitment and hard work has been instrumental in our continued success. Our Patron, Prof. Bruce Robinson, has been an outstanding figurehead and an icon of our profession. I sincerely thank each and every one of my fellow councillors for their time, efforts, wisdom and compassion.

In closing, and on behalf of our beneficiaries, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all our donors and supporters. It is your generosity that allows us to make a real difference in the lives of doctors in need. May your ongoing assistance enable the outstanding work of the Medical Benevolent Association of NSW-ACT continue for many years to come.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Andrew Wines
President

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS ACHIEVED

The Annual Report provides us with an opportunity to celebrate our achievements over the year. It also gives us a chance to acknowledge the team, our volunteer Council and the partners who have assisted us in our work. I am proud to say we have accomplished all of the year one goals set out in our current three-year Strategic Plan.

PREVENTATIVE SERVICES

The most notable achievement has been our successful move into the preventative services space. We now offer, Financial Counselling, Group and Peer-Support Workshops, Seminars and Presentations to hospitals and other medical groups. Doctors who have accessed these programs have provided positive feedback and noted improved well-being. This has been measured by our validated surveys, which is another initiative that has been added this year. Recently we added Medical Career Planning/Counselling, which will be helpful for doctors who are early in their career, and for those showing signs of burnout. This can be done using online or in-person sessions, which are provided by our partner, Dr Ashe Coxon of Medical Career Planning.

NEW TEAM

The move into the preventative space has meant we have extended our opening hours and expanded the skill-set of our team, which involved welcoming Senior Social Workers Julia Kwiet and Alex Wood. You can read about Julia and Alex's years of experience on page 8.

FUNDRAISING

We had another successful year in attracting grant income (up 132%) and donations from groups and corporates (up 81%). One significant grant was from the NSW Government (Department of Communities and Justice), which allowed us to continue supporting the doctors severely impacted by the 2022 Northern NSW Floods. You can read more about this on Page 12. This diversification of our income reduced our reliance on individual supporter donations, which is a positive for our sustainability. With this additional income, we delivered a record number of frontline services to 234 doctors while still returning a small surplus, despite the fact that our investment income was 40% lower than in FY2022. We also halved the cost of running our appeals, and now have one of the lowest costs of fundraising in the charity sector, at less than 4 cents per dollar raised.

MARKETING

We also rebranded and this report is our first showing! We trust you agree that we have achieved a fresher, more contemporary brand, while still paying tribute to our 127-year history and recognising our ACT work. In a bid to improve awareness, we also began sponsoring Dr Cheryl Martin's "The Mind Full Medic Podcast" which helped us attract younger doctors and has allowed us to connect and collaborate with other stakeholders in the doctor well-being sector. We have also progressed our new website rebuild and we're looking forward to launching it in early 2024.

TRENDS

Some of the trends we are seeing mimic those published by the media including an increasing number of GPs seeking help; regional doctors making up more of our caseload; more doctors self-referring; more doctors reporting financial hardship; more doctors being temporarily unable to work;

and higher than average financial gifts being needed due to cost-of-living increases. As expected, the flow-on effects of COVID-19 and the many natural disasters also continues, with doctors impacted by these events making up a significant part of our work, as do doctors facing a regulatory issue requiring longer term support. We are also helping many doctors who are yet to retire, even though they are well past the normal retirement age.

MOVING FORWARD

We still have much to work to do, including helping to reduce the stigma attached to doctors seeking help (especially for male doctors or those suffering a mental health issue). We will also continue to raise awareness of our services (especially to younger doctors), as even with a record number of people making contact this year, we know there are many more who continue to suffer in silence.

THANK YOU

I wish to thank each member of Council, particularly our new President, Dr Andrew Wines, whose availability, wisdom, support and encouragement for the whole team makes the work more rewarding. A special thank you to the NSW Rural Doctors Network who assist us in numerous ways with our services, program delivery, and provide the venue for our Council Meetings and staff team days. Naturally, a BIG thank you goes to our supporters, funders and key partners, as without you we could not do what we do! I am personally excited to see what the year ahead brings, and want to wholeheartedly thank my team who are always professional, compassionate, dedicated and fun to work alongside.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Fallon
Executive Officer

WHAT WE DO

The Medical Benevolent Association of NSW-ACT helps doctors and their families in need by providing counselling, case management, short-term financial crisis support, information, referrals and advocacy. We also facilitate workshops and peer-support programs aimed at supporting doctors' well-being. All work is provided on a confidential basis by specialised professionals. We provide a safe and non-judgemental avenue of support to the medical community, and have been doing this vital work for over 127 years.



SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

We provide an independent, non-judgemental space to talk about anything that might be happening in the lives of doctors or their families. This includes issues such as grief and loss, mental health concerns, relationships issues, illness or workplace bullying, along with anything causing a doctor or their family distress. We can be contacted via phone or email and we encourage every doctor to look out for their colleagues and let them know about our free services.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

For a range of complex reasons, doctors and their families can find themselves under extreme financial stress. If a doctor is injured in an accident, experiencing burnout, to facing a significant health diagnosis or needing to relocate due to family and domestic violence, they can find themselves unable to work and in financial distress. Doctors can contact our Social Work team who will guide them through the process which includes providing supporting documentation. All requests that meet our financial hardship guidelines are referred each month to our Council, who make the decision.



REFERRAL/ADVOCACY

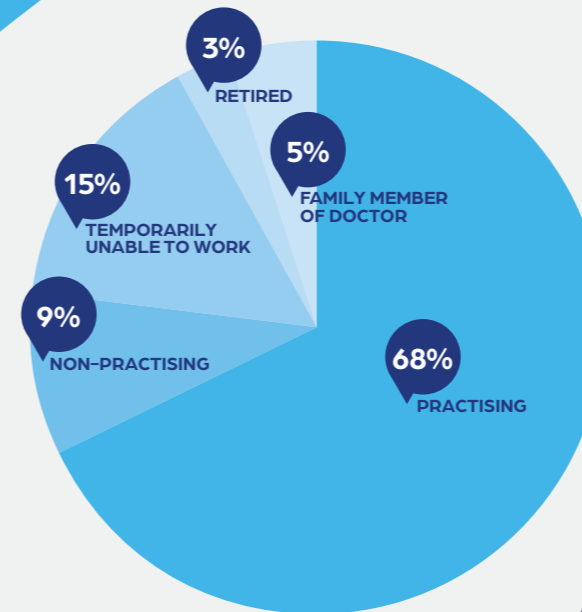
If we are unable to support a doctor directly, we can refer them (with consent) to someone who can assist. If a doctor is worried about themselves, a colleague or family member, we are here to support them to find the best way to move forward. We also advocate for individual doctors if required, as well as working with other organisations and the government at all levels, to help create better working environments for every doctor, always with the aim of improving the well-being of the entire profession.



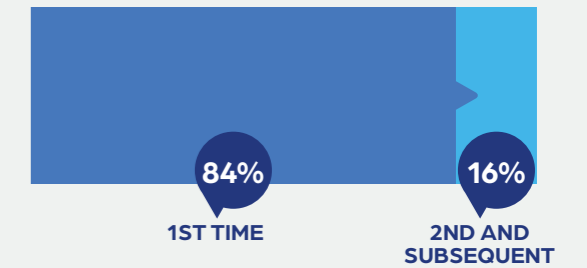
PREVENTATIVE SERVICES

We run preventative workshops and facilitate peer-support programs on, which are designed to improve the mental health and well-being of doctors. We also work with key partners who have specialised expertise in medical insurance, law, financial counselling and medical career planning.

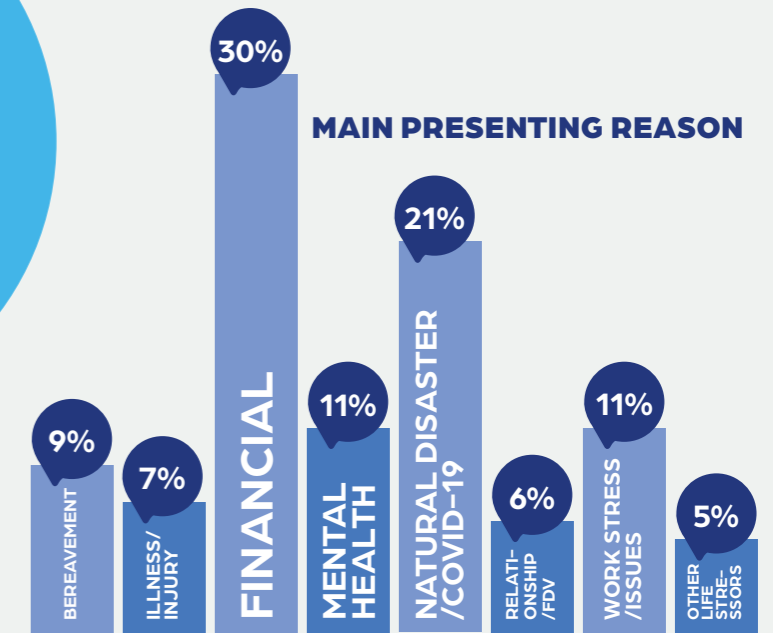
WORK STATUS



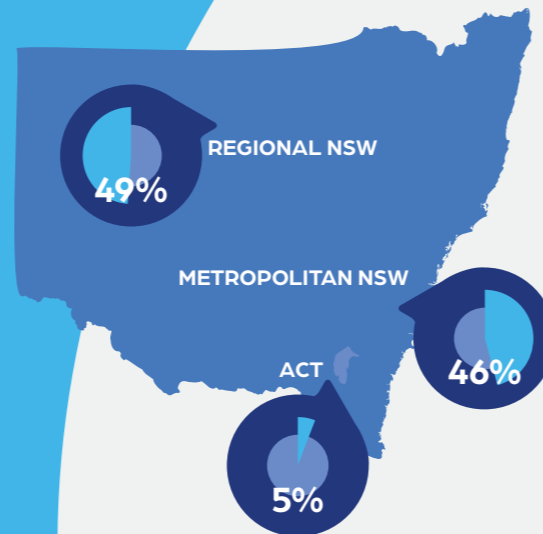
NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS



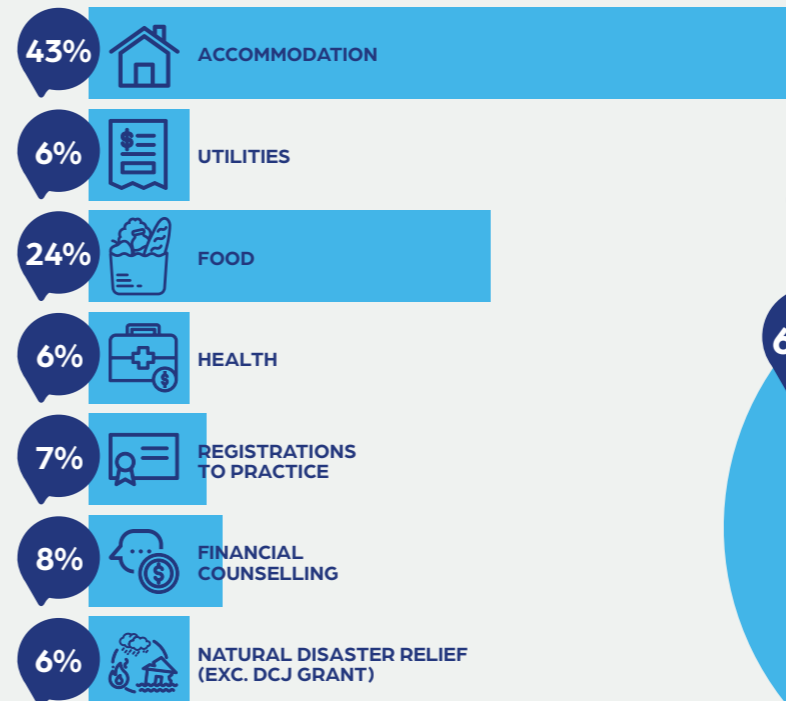
MAIN PRESENTING REASON



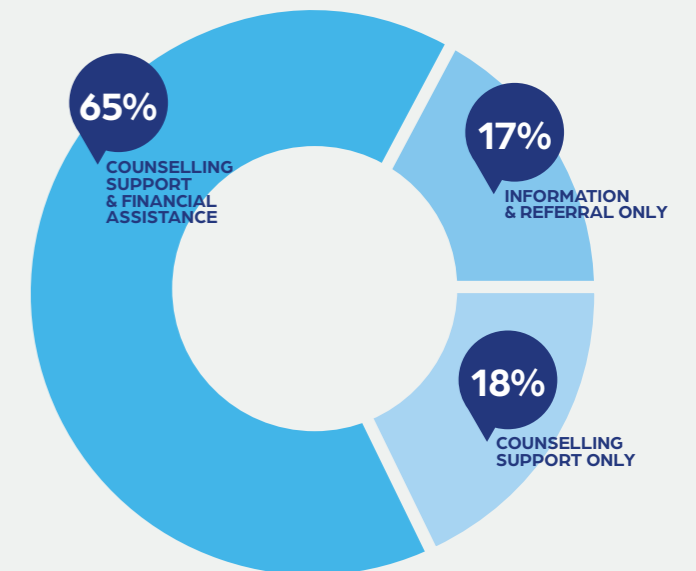
LOCATION



TYPE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT



TYPE OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN



AGE PROFILE



MEET THE NEW SOCIAL WORK TEAM



JULIA KWIET, SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER

Julia Kwiet is a Clinical Social Worker, having graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Sydney. Julia has additional qualifications in Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) and a Master in Counselling. With over 20-years experience in a variety of community, health and education settings, she has gained clinical, research and training expertise in managing complex trauma, psychosocial assessment, and therapeutic interventions. Julia is a regular invited speaker at health conferences and has delivered many successful workshops. She is currently working towards obtaining her Mental Health Accreditation through the Australian Association of Social Work (AASW).

Julia is passionate about doctors' health and adopts a strengths-based recovery model of care, aiming to provide a safe space for doctors or family members, to express their concerns, be acknowledged, validated, and supported. She understands the importance of working systemically to decrease stigma and works collaboratively with MBA NSW-ACT's partners to advocate for cultural change to the well-being of doctors.

Julia lives with her family in Sydney. When not working she enjoys spending time in the country with her family and two horses.



ALEX WOOD, SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER

After completing a Bachelor of Social Work at Sydney University in 1996, Alex has worked in a variety of roles, including hospitals, community centres and government. With over 25 years in the profession, Alex has gained extensive experience and skills in providing counselling, crisis intervention and case management as well as advocating for clients to ensure they receive the care they need.

More recently, Alex has specialised in providing support to victims of trauma, domestic and family violence, grief, addiction, mental health, and disability. Alex was born with a life-long medical condition, and so is particularly passionate about providing professional support for doctors and their families in crisis, as it allows her to give back for all the amazing work that doctors do.

Alex lives in Sydney with her son and loves to spend her time with friends and family and at her new holiday home in the Hunter Valley.

SOCIAL WORK REPORT

We would like to start our report by acknowledging the social work colleagues that preceded us: Ida Chan, Susan Zicat, Meredith McVey OAM and of course the legendary Mary Doughty AM. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment in providing our beneficiaries with accessible and compassionate care, have all contributed to the impeccable reputation that our service enjoys today. Not a week passes without a former beneficiary acknowledging the positive impact these social workers had on their lives. These are big shoes to fill and we are grateful that Meredith has made herself available as our social work supervisor. This has made the transition into our new roles much easier. Thank you, Meredith.

SOCIAL WORK GOAL

Our goal is to provide a safe space for doctors and their family members to speak openly, without being judged, to be validated, acknowledged, and supported through any adversity or life challenge. We provide short-term counselling, case management, advocacy, and practical assistance and referral. We work collaboratively and in partnership with several other organisations, including Doctors' Health NSW, Hollman Webb Lawyers, Medical Insurers and our specialised financial counselling partner, Sergio Arcaini. All of these partners are able to further assist our beneficiaries in their area of expertise.

OUR WORK THIS YEAR

This year we provided services to 234 doctors. We supported 59 new referrals, as well as our continuing casework, including those doctors impacted by the 2022 Northern NSW Floods. A record number of beneficiaries took up our referral to work with our financial counselling partner.

We also ran workshops and peer support programs that involved 132 doctors. Our post-event surveys and unsolicited testimonials indicate these sessions were well received. We also initiated a more formal evaluation process to measure both outcomes and impact of our work, seeking direct feedback to continuously improve the work we do.

Looking ahead, we can now offer medical coaching through our new partner, Dr Ashe Coxon of Medical Career Planning.



17 DOCTORS TOOK UP THE OFFER TO WORK WITH OUR SPECIALISED FINANCIAL COUNSELLING PARTNER



WE RAN WORKSHOPS FOR 132 DOCTORS

"Words cannot express how grateful we are. It is a very humbling experience to ask for help and we appreciate your support – this is a huge pressure relief for our family. I am so grateful I came across your organisation. Your social workers and financial counsellors have been so helpful."

– FEMALE GP, SYDNEY

TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

A positive trend seen this year was a record number of self-referrals (48%). We hope this signifies a reduction in the perceived stigma of doctors reaching out and asking for help. We also saw a reduction in the number of younger doctors, which may indicate the targeted hospital Junior Medical Officer's (JMO's) support programs are working.

We saw a continuation of the trend of more GPs seeking help (54%), as well as more doctors from regional areas (49%) and an increase in emergency physicians. These trends are in line with current research, indicating that the pressures and negative impact of the acute COVID-19 response was greatest on our front-line and rural and remote doctors.

In terms of gender, it was unusual to see the imbalance in gender (24% male and 76% female). Research suggests that if negative experiences such as sexual harassment, occupational and family violence and discrimination are removed as variables, the balance may be more even. Although, this statistic may also be reflective of a greater reluctance for male doctors to admit vulnerability and reach out for help. These gender issues require a systemic response.

Whilst the main reason for seeking support was cited as financial, the underlying causes of financial stress, are more complex and often multi-factorial. It is important that we address these underlying issues rather than just providing financial assistance. While the number of doctors engaged in an investigation by a regulatory body is not large, these individuals experience very complex stressors and require much longer-term social work support.

Sadly, referrals from doctors and family members affected by family domestic violence are growing. We have also supported a number of families following the suicide of a doctor. These rates have significantly increased in recent years and are of great concern. We also saw the wider effect of cost-of-living pressures, mortgage stress and the rental crisis, causing a higher percentage of practicing doctors (68%) needing help and raising the average gift value. Due to the continuing complexity of our cases, the Council have recommended we gain clinical supervision and mentorship from Prof. Carmelle Peisah and Dr Kiran Lele who are kindly providing this freely, and we thank them wholeheartedly for this valuable support. The Council have also approved me to gain my AASW Professional Accreditation in Mental Health, which I intend to complete this coming year.

NEW INITIATIVES

As part of our 3-Year Strategic Plan to expand into providing preventative services, we delivered several workshops and seminars on doctors' health issues, including recovery from trauma, natural disasters and burnout. This has not only helped increase awareness of these issues, but also helped to break down the stigma and challenge the culture of silence prevalent in many health organisations. Our attendees are made aware of our work and the many other organisations who operate in the doctors' health space to give them options. We plan to extend these services moving forward with a particular emphasis on hospital Junior Medical Officer's, GP's and regional doctors, having been inspired by the impact our work had in Lismore and the trends we are seeing. You can read more about this flood work (funded by the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice) on Page 12. Another initiative we delivered, that utilised my colleague, Alex Wood's, professional background, was reducing the wait time for beneficiaries who qualify for government assistance. This has been particularly important for our beneficiaries who are victims of Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) or any doctor that has stopped work abruptly. Alex assists them to complete the applications correctly, thereby avoiding unnecessary delays.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Our financial assistance is targeted at crisis relief, with ongoing social work support continuing as the predicament eases. This gives time for alternative plans to be made that hopefully enable the beneficiary to return to financial independence. Given the limited financial resources of our small organisation and the increasing demand, we have reviewed our intake and assessment process. The team works in collaboration with our external financial counsellor, to verify hardship, explore all other means of support and resources (e.g., accessing insurance, superannuation, and any possible government support) before any money is gifted. This ensures we allocate our resources to where they are most needed and useful.

ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION

Breaking down the complex barriers preventing doctors to seek support and changing the prevailing culture in medicine takes time. A collaborative and co-ordinated response is required, and we are always open to strengthen and form new partnerships with other organisations working to advance doctors' health and well-being. A grant from AbbVie Foundation enabled our team to attend the Australasian Doctors Health Conference in December 2022. This was a wonderful opportunity to be updated on the latest research and the practical responses being made to combat the systematic problems that impact on doctors' well-being. It also helped us to form new collaborative partnerships.

CHALLENGES AND OUR WORK MOVING FORWARD

Doctors' trauma is deep and real. Occupational violence, harassment and workplace stress are unfortunately on the increase. COVID-19 and the recent natural disasters have caused significant pressures and impacts on our front-line doctors. Recent Australian studies* reveal that the suicide rates for female doctors are 2.27 times higher than the general population and male doctors are 1.41 times higher. Burnout is cited at around 50% in most studies. We have a known shortage and exodus of GP's (even more critical in rural and remote areas) with further shortages predicted in the future. These are all complex problems requiring a systematic approach. We welcome the "Every Doctor, Every Setting: A National Framework and Action Plan" project being led by DR4DRS and look forward to contributing next year. Making doctors' well-being a national priority will enable quality patient care. We plan to continue to be active in our advocacy work and to welcome collaboration with colleagues and other organisations in the medical community to achieve this.

THANK YOU

We wish to thank our President, Dr Andrew Wines, and our Council for their welcome, advice and support during our first year. We have been able to draw on their expertise and are humbled by their support, availability, and guidance. They deal with every financial request submitted with compassion and respect for the beneficiary. We also thank Louise, our EO, for her leadership and support. Finally, we know we could not do our work if it were not for our supporters who donate to MBA NSW-ACT. Your generosity and compassion for your colleagues is both humbling and inspirational. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

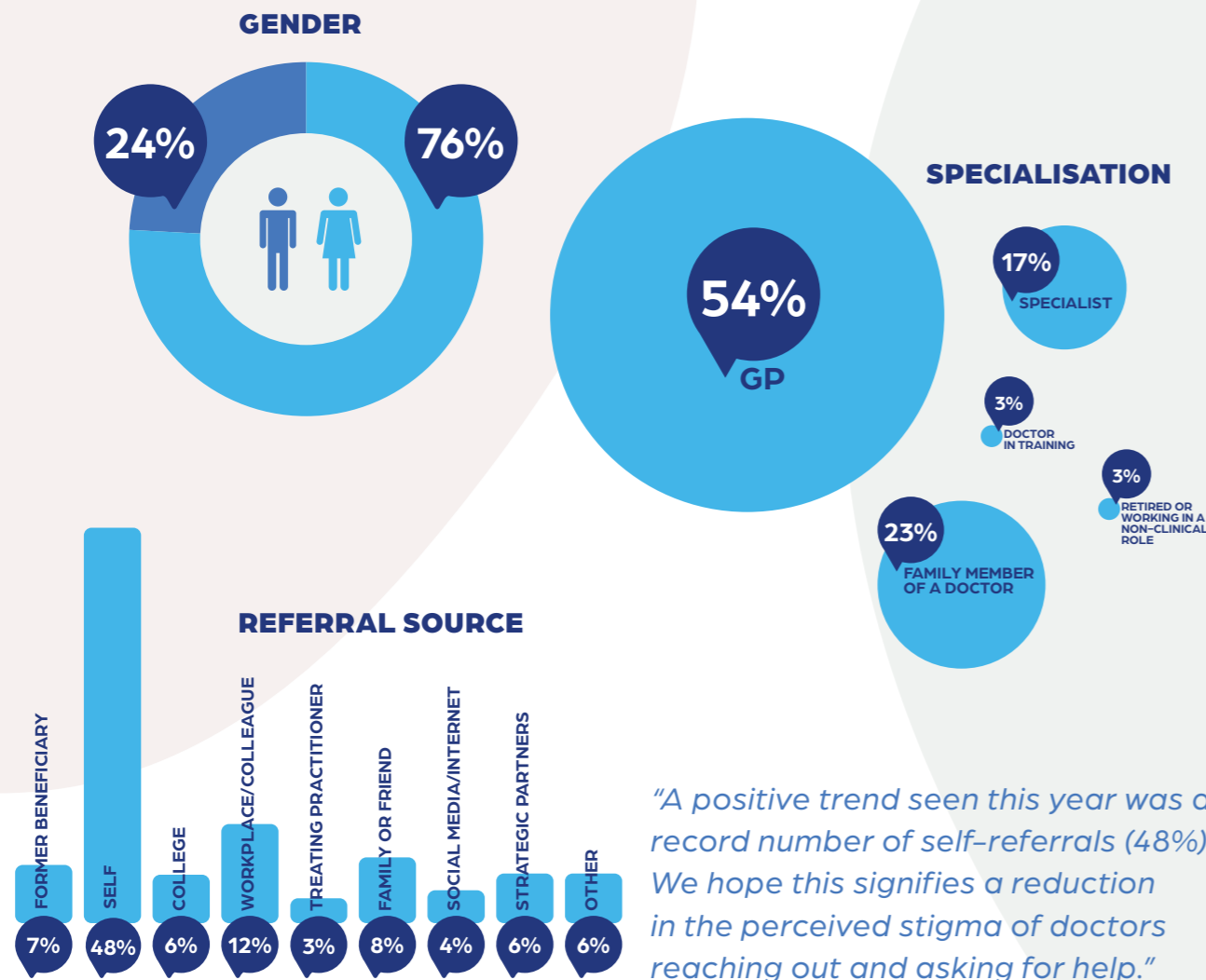


Julia Kwiet,
Senior Social Worker



Julia and Alex at the NSW Rural Doctors GP Refresher Conference held in Port Macquarie

*Amy Pascoe PhD, Medical Journal of Australia
<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2018/reducing-risksuicide-medical-profession>



"A positive trend seen this year was a record number of self-referrals (48%). We hope this signifies a reduction in the perceived stigma of doctors reaching out and asking for help."

FLOOD SPOTLIGHT

When the floods waters receded in the Northern NSW town of Lismore last year, it left a trail of devastation that caught 45 doctors in its wake. As detailed in our 2022 Annual Report, we were quick to enlist our donor's support and raised \$74,000 in less than a month via our first special "Flood Appeal" which added to the \$10,000 we received from CommBank Foundation. This enabled MBA NSW-ACT to provide the first emergency funding to these doctors. We were also able to help three clinics that were completely destroyed by the floods to move into temporary accommodation so they could continue to service the community's health needs.



AWARDED - NSW GOVERNMENT FLOOD GRANT

On the back of this work and realising there was much more needed to support these doctors through the trauma, we applied for a NSW State Government Grant that was offered through the Department of Communities and Justice. We were thrilled to be successful in gaining \$100,000, which was one of their largest grants.

WHAT WE DID WITH THE GRANT

The money was used to help these affected doctors in practical ways. We supported their mental health by providing a safe space for them to share how they were feeling as they moved through the different stages of processing the trauma, grief and financial loss they experienced.

In summary we provided:

- Individual counselling over the 12-month period to 39 doctors.
- General and targeted group Flood Debrief and Peer-Support sessions that involved 31 doctors, including a separate session for the resident cohort of Lismore Hospital.
- Further gifts for the three badly damaged clinics to ensure they remained financially viable. We helped cover the costs of replacing some medical equipment and supplies.
- Locum relief for a specialist who had suffered complete loss of his practice and needed a break after a very difficult 15 months.
- Additional emergency funds to individual doctors who also lost houses and/or livelihoods.

"Your assistance is very much appreciated. To date, it has helped us in the rebuild phase and to be able to again offer our services for the community."

– PRACTICE MANAGER, LISMORE GP CLINIC

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Our work was impactful, contributing to the following outcomes:

- All the GPs were retained in Lismore, which is a huge win, as the town already had a shortage prior to the floods. It's also experiencing higher health demands after the floods, especially in the mental health area.
- All three practices were able to reopen and have remained viable, with two at the same capacity as they were prior to the floods.
- Lismore Hospital reported it has retained its highest number of resident medical officers.

FUNDED BY



"The work done by MBA NSW-ACT's amazing team with our young resident group enabled them to concentrate on the new skills they had learned and the teamwork they experienced and how they were now better doctors after the trauma of the floods. It boosted their morale, helped them become a more cohesive team and in terms of a significant KPI – we have had a greater proportion of trainees stay on than ever before, in what is still a devastated country town! I believe MBA NSW-ACT's professional peer support work for the young residents, contributed significantly to them being retained."

– SENIOR SPECIALIST LISMORE HOSPITAL

The Group Debrief and Peer Support sessions were facilitated by Prof Stewart Dunn, who is a Professor of Psychological Medicine at RNS Hospital, and Julia Kwiet, our Senior Social Worker. Our partner, NSW Rural Doctors Network, assisted to communicate the sessions and covered the costs of the catering. This was a first in Australia and we have since reported on the learnings at the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) conference in October 2023. The presentation was titled, "Over our heads: lessons from doctors' responses to the Northern Rivers Flooding".

One of the resident medical officers commented by email after the Lismore Hospital Resident Group Session:

"Having had a week to digest Prof. Dunn's wisdom and having heard feedback from others there, I am confident we have provided a much-needed space to reflect and extend our thinking around the events of the flood. It was very much what I hope we would be able to achieve, and really highlights a need to ensure that people have access to similar spaces in the future. Once again thank you both for efforts over the last few months, you have provided a life-changing changing experience that I suspect many (including myself) will carry through our careers."

Another specialist who attended our first group session that brought together both junior and more senior doctors, commented:

"Many thanks for organising the group debriefing session with Prof. Dunn. His exercises and advice were very valuable...sharing our stories of destruction and hopelessness, all the while trying to carry on was impactful."

After the targeted group session at Keen Street Clinic, we received the unsolicited testimonial on the right, from their Practice Director.

ADVOCACY

We worked as part of the Natural Disaster and Emergency Stakeholder Group (NDE) organised by our key partners, NSW RDN and AMA-NSW. One of the key requests was to have GP's classified as essential services in future disaster planning. A major win was the NSW Government providing an additional \$5 million to be directed to the recovery of healthcare practices in the flood impacted Northern NSW area.

MOVING FORWARD

This work has helped us form close links with the medical community in Lismore that we are sure will endure for many years to come. As a strong believer in the power of peer-support, we have also facilitated these doctors connecting with other flood impacted doctors in the Central West region, which has been of benefit to both parties. We have since applied for and been granted more funding from the NSW Government to enable us to replicate this successful work in other flood-impacted regions of NSW. We look forward to reporting on that in the year ahead.

MBA NSW-ACT will continue to offer counselling and case management support on an as-needs basis, along with offering financial assistance to any doctor suffering longer term financial hardship as a result of these floods. We wish to thank Prof. Stewart Dunn and RNS Hospital for releasing him to work with us, and we hope to engage with him again in the future on other impactful projects.

"Thank you so much for your wonderful support this year while we recovered from the floods. It has meant a lot to us that it is genuine and sustained care. We appreciate the recent session with Prof. Dunn and feel it has brought us closer as a team. Much appreciated."

– PRACTICE DIRECTOR, KEEN STREET CLINIC



CASE STUDIES

Each day we work with doctors experiencing a range of complex issues, including everything from family and domestic violence, anxiety, depression, complex and chronic health issues, burnout, addiction, relationship breakdowns and more recently long COVID-19. These are just two of the stories of doctors we have worked alongside. Sadly, we have many, many more. It's great to see that more doctors and their families are starting to reach out for support, but unfortunately there are still doctors who are unaware of our services or who feel reluctant to ask for help, often due to feelings of shame. We encourage everyone to help us increase the awareness of our services by telling their colleagues or arranging for us to present at their hospital or workplace. We believe that together we can help create hope and support doctors when they need it most.

DOCTORS CAN BE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS TOO!

RUTH*, FEMALE GP, ACT

Ruth is a 52-year-old GP who has devoted her life to her medical career and patients. An empathic doctor, she often works 12-hour shifts and hasn't had a holiday in years. She has few interests outside of work and has neglected her own health and self-care. Ruth has been dealing with a complex family situation, multiple psycho-social stressors, and significant intergenerational trauma.

One of her long-term patients made a complaint to the regulator about her professional conduct. This caused further stress and resulted in what Ruth termed an "existential crisis". Still, she did not reach out or speak about the impact this was having on her. The extra stress exacerbated some existing relationship issues with her long-term partner and they broke up.

Ruth became more isolated and things started to spiral. She began to self-prescribe to manage her deteriorating sleep and declining mood. Eventually a colleague expressed concern about her capacity to continue working and suggested she take a break. She knew this was the right thing to do, and Ruth stopped working. However, after four months of no income, the bills were starting to mount.

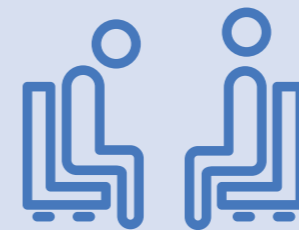
Ruth had been a long-term donor to MBA NSW-ACT and knew about their services, but never imagined she'd be in a position to need them. However, being two months behind in rent she realised she was on the brink of homelessness and so made the call. MBA NSW-ACT's social worker gave her emotional support and encouraged her to contact DRS4DRs (ACT) who introduced her to an experienced GP, to help manage her own care. Our social worker then organised an emergency payment to pay her overdue rent and secure her housing. She was also supported to complete a Centrelink application, as a return to work was still a way off. At the monthly Council meeting, a gift was approved to cover her groceries and household bills until the government payment kicked in.

Working with our experienced social workers provided Ruth with a safe, confidential space to express her concerns openly and be heard. Together they explored priorities and options and developed a care plan. Over the next few months, during regular sessions, Ruth was able to reflect on how much she had neglected her own needs, including her relationships and life outside of medicine. Feeling better, Ruth took some positive steps to make change. She joined a Sunday walking group, took up guitar lessons, and initiated contact with some old friends. Soon after, she received news that the regulator had completed their review and no conditions were placed on her returning to practice.

At a recent check-in with Ruth, she told our social worker that she has returned to her old practice but on a part-time basis. She is starting to feel like her old self and commented "While I wouldn't wish the last six months on anybody, I have learnt a lot. Nowadays I always put my own oxygen mask on first."

*Case has been deidentified to protect privacy

"Thank you for your personal assistance. Please pass of my gratitude to the Council. This gift will definitely assist with my bills and allow me to take time off to get well and work out some important life and career decisions."



WE PROVIDED
COUNSELLING
SERVICES TO
112 DOCTORS



WE PROVIDED
SERVICES TO
234 DOCTORS



PANIC ATTACKS HAPPEN TO DOCTORS TOO!

BEN*, MALE SPECIALIST, NSW

Ben, in his mid-40s, has spent the past six years studying to become a specialist. Upon passing his final exams, he appeared to have, what he described as a "mental breakdown" and started to experience panic attacks and severe anxiety. He had heard about MBA NSW-ACT during his internship, and decided to call for a confidential chat, knowing we were independent of any regulator.

On speaking to our social worker, he immediately felt validated and at ease. He could speak openly about his earlier life experiences and together they reflected on how these may have influenced his life choices of becoming a doctor. He was also able to recognise his avoidant coping mechanisms, and admitted his general reluctance to seek help.

Our social worker encouraged Ben to discuss his mental health with his GP, who was able to provide a comprehensive mental health plan for managing his anxiety, which was subsequently diagnosed as resulting from adverse early childhood

"I cannot thank you enough for the help - it has been invaluable. I cannot find the words to express my gratitude for your non-judgemental support."

experiences and trauma. Ben engaged successfully with a therapist, and was able to reflect on his early life experiences while learning to better manage his panic attacks and anxiety.

Ben did not need any financial assistance, just a safe space to talk openly. He now believes his lived experience will make him a better doctor. He is keen to provide other doctors with peer support and is well aware of the signs to look out for in his colleagues.

*Case has been deidentified to protect privacy

TREASURER'S REPORT



State Government Flood Grant, through the Department of Communities and Justice. This grant came off the back of our work last year in Lismore and surrounds, and enabled us to provide both individual and group/peer support programs as well as provide further equipment, supplies and locum relief to the three clinics that were devastated in the flooding.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, it's likely there will be a rise in the amounts being requested as the general cost of living, interest rate rises and rental crisis continue to put more pressure on doctors and their families. However, under the sound financial management of Louise Fallon our Executive Officer, and my fellow Councillors, I am confident that MBA NSW-ACT will continue to achieve our mission. As required of medium-size charities, our accounts have been audited and the full report is available on our website and on request.

Yours sincerely,

Glenn McNally
Dr Glenn McNally
Hon. Treasurer

STRONG FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Despite relatively adverse economic conditions, I am pleased to report that the MBA NSW-ACT has returned an operating surplus of \$13,603 and a comprehensive profit of \$116,188 for the year ended 30th June 2023. This surplus was achieved while providing a record of \$348,914 in direct beneficiary services, which is \$41,217 or 13% above 2022's previous record of \$307,697. Our net asset position as at 30th June 2023, is now \$2,536,917 (vs \$2,420,729 in FY22).

INCREASED FUNDRAISING AND DIVERSIFICATION OF INCOME SUCCESS

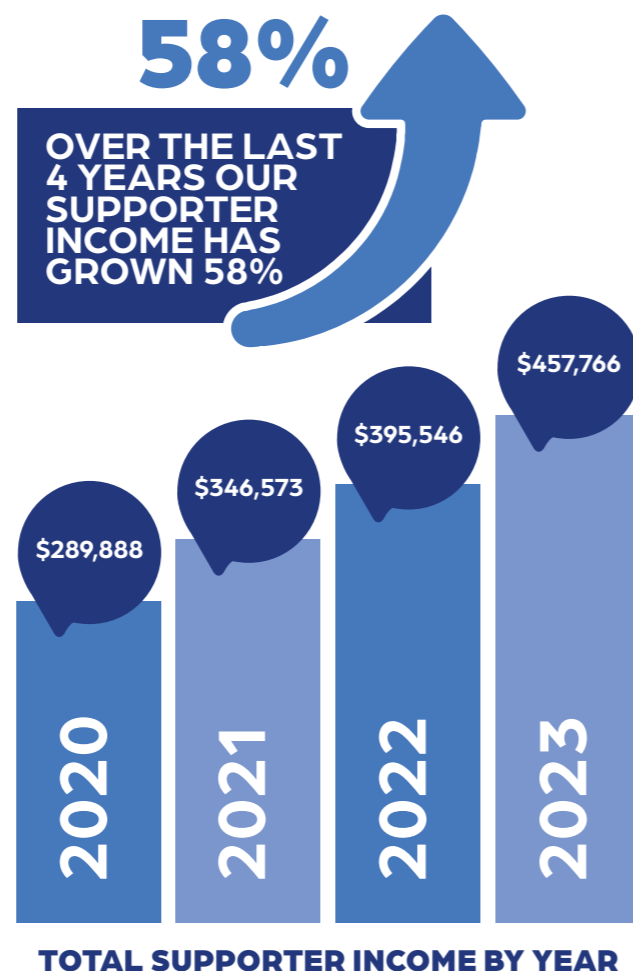
Our Executive Officer, Louise Fallon, has continued her successful fundraising efforts, enabling MBA NSW-ACT to achieve a relatively balanced income stream. Grant income was up by \$92,500 on last year (\$162,500 vs \$70,000) and group donations were up by \$32,299 (\$72,294 vs \$39,895), which helped to mitigate the \$61,866 reduction in investment income (\$91,139 compared to \$153,005 last year) caused by the unfavourable market conditions. The resulting total income for FY23 was slightly better than last year at \$549,996 (vs \$548,552 in 2022).

COST CONTAINMENT

Our investment into internal systems has paid benefits with our operating costs being 2% less than last year, despite CPI being up over 7% for the same period. MBA NSW-ACT has also achieved the impressive KPI of fundraising costs being less than 4%, which for a small organisation is quite remarkable. Also notable is the fact that we were able to direct 76% of our total fundraising directly to frontline services.

THANK YOU

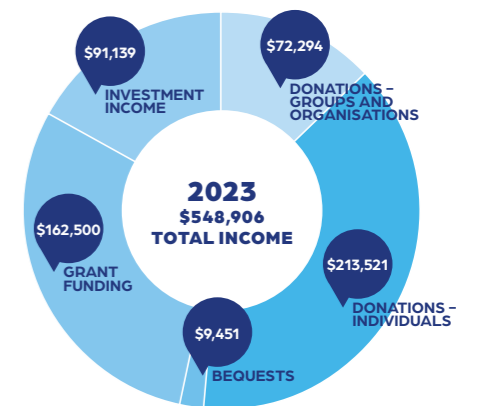
A special thank you to all our supporters, hospital medical staff council's, corporate partners and foundations, who have continued to fund MBA NSW-ACT. Without your financial support, we would not have been able to support the 234 doctors this year. One funding highlight worth mentioning was our success in obtaining our first NSW



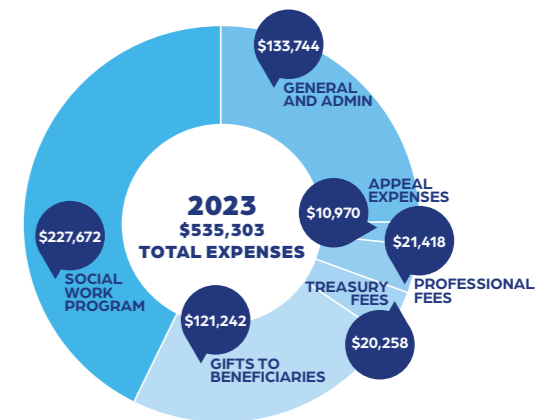
PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		
	2023	2022
INCOME	\$	\$
Donations - Organisations	72,294	39,895
Donations - Individuals	212,146	280,557
Bequests	9,451	3,094
Other Donations - AMA & Directed	1,375	2,000
Grant Funding	162,500	70,000
Dividends Received	51,075	79,385
Interest and Trust Distributions Received	25,459	40,989
Imputed Credits Refundable	14,606	32,632
Profit on Disposal of Investments	-	-
Total Income	548,906	548,552
EXPENDITURE ON ADMINISTRATION	\$	\$
Audit & Other Professional Expenses	21,418	23,159
Appeal Expenses	10,970	25,167
Depreciation	2,018	1,212
General and Administration Expenses	8,780	10,861
Insurance	5,963	6,960
Portfolio Management Fees	20,258	21,685
Superannuation Contributions	16,284	13,398
Wages - Administration	100,698	88,212
Total Expenses	186,389	190,654
NET SURPLUS AFTER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	362,517	357,898
LESS: EXPENDITURE ON DIRECT SERVICES	\$	\$
Payments to Beneficiaries	121,242	145,348
Social Work Counselling Support	227,672	162,350
Total Direct Program Services	348,914	307,698
NET OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	13,603	50,200

TOTAL FUNDRAISING DIRECTED TO OUR PROGRAMS **76%**



GRANT FUNDING INCREASED 132% THIS FY
GROUP INCOME INCREASED 81% THIS FY



FOR EVERY DOLLAR RAISED IT NOW COSTS LESS THAN 4 CENTS IN FUNDRAISING COSTS **<4c**

PATRON'S REPORT



"We could not help these doctors and their families if it was not for the support of those doctors and other medical related groups who continue to fund us. To you, I send you my deep appreciation and respect."

We could not help these doctors and their families if it was not for the support of those doctors and other medical related groups who continue to fund us. To you, I send you my deep appreciation and respect. You are expressing your compassion for your colleagues in a very practical way. I also invite those who have not yet donated, to consider supporting us. We have one of the lowest costs of fundraising, so you can be confident knowing that 96 cents of every dollar donated will go to support a healthier, more robust medical workforce. It is only with a healthy workforce that we can improve the quality of our patient care, which is our ultimate objective.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr Chris Dalton, the outgoing President, on behalf of all NSW and ACT doctors for his extraordinary leadership over the past 3 years, what can only be described as an extremely challenging period. Our new President, Dr Andrew Wines, is very experienced having already served 29 years on Council, the last three as Vice President. While I see the next few years as continuing to be a period of great change for the profession, I have every confidence that Andrew will steer this extremely reputable charity to have even more impact, and I continue to be honoured to be involved as their patron.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Bruce G. Robinson,
MD, MSc, FRACP, Consultant Physician in Endocrinology

The last 12 months have been a period of adaptation to the changes in the healthcare environment following the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also been a period of rapid change, the introduction of new diagnostic methods, personalised treatments and increasing use of artificial intelligence in medicine generally.

I raise these matters as well as healthcare funding and workforce shortages, as all of these and the other challenges that face the profession, are adding to the pressure on doctors to do more, often with fewer resources, and static or reduced funding. Collectively the stress placed upon the healthcare workforce is increasing. We are seeing increased referrals particularly from General Practitioners and often because of financial and stress related issues.

Our role as patient advocates requires more time spent getting access to new treatments for our patients and the time to do this is often squeezed into gaps between consultations or procedures. There is a sense of being on the run all of the time, and this can lead to burnout and stress, as well as challenges to personal and family relationships.

Recently, MBA NSW-ACT has devoted more resources to work proactively, with faith in the notion that prevention is better than a cure. This is helping doctors recognise and manage these pressures. Our new programs have supported many doctors and I commend them to each of you. Take the time to understand what MBA NSW-ACT can offer, and even if you don't feel that you personally need their services, be informed enough to recommend them to your colleagues.

I particularly congratulate Council and our Executive Officer, Louise Fallon, for their leadership in developing and introducing these new programs that go well beyond the financial and counselling help that MBA NSW-ACT has traditionally provided over its 127-year history. Although these proactive measures are very important, we are still mindful of our core work of supporting doctors in crisis. In that work we have again seen an increase in those needing help, especially short-term financial support, which is no doubt linked to the prevailing economic conditions.



Bruce applauding Dr Chris Dalton's contribution at our 2022 AGM

OUR EXECUTIVE

"The care of doctors has been important to me and to family for a number of generations. It's great to be part of an organisation that provides financial and emotional support for colleagues and their families at a time when it is needed most."

– DR ANDREW WINES



**PRESIDENT,
DR ANDREW WINES**

Andrew is an Orthopaedic Surgeon who specialises in the ankle and foot and works in several North Shore hospitals. He is a second-generation Councillor and joined MBA NSW-ACT as a young intern over 29 years ago. In 2003 he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to assess the services available to doctors in times of crisis. Andrew has held various roles throughout that time including the last few years as Vice President.



**VICE PRESIDENT,
DR FELIX CHOI**

Felix graduated from UNSW and has a Diploma in Paediatrics, and became a fellow of the RACGP in 2002. He currently practices as a GP in Sydney's North Shore and has a special interest in skin cancer. He has earned Certificates in both Dermoscopy and Skin Cancer Medicine and has been involved in the education of General Practitioners on Skin Cancer Management. Felix has been on Council for over 18 years, and helped guide the organisation as Treasurer through the challenges of the Global Financial Crisis.



**HON. TREASURER,
DR GLENN MCNALLY**

Glenn is a specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist engaged solely in diagnostic ultrasound in both the public sector (as the Director of Medical Imaging at the Royal Hospital for Women in Sydney) and in the private sector. He has a long-standing interest in education and improving general standards of practice in diagnostic imaging. Glenn joined Council in August 2020 and has been Treasurer since November 2021.

"I enjoy working with the other medical practitioners on the Council, who come together on a monthly basis with the sole purpose of helping fellow colleagues in need. Being a Councillor for MBA NSW-ACT has been a wonderful experience. It has given me the opportunity to give back to my profession as well as to establish other networks that I would not have been able to do had I not been involved with such a longstanding and respected organisation."

– DR FELIX CHOI

NOTE: The SECRETARIAL role is performed by Ms Louise Fallon, Our Executive Officer

OUR COUNCILLORS



DR ANTONY (TONY) JOSEPH AM
Tony graduated from the USYD in 1977 and, after spending a few years training in hospital and obstetric medicine, he settled into General Practice in Murwillumbah in Northern NSW. After five years he returned to Sydney to train in Emergency Medicine, his last role being Senior Staff Specialist in Emergency Medicine and the Director of Trauma Services at RNS Hospital. He was awarded the Australian Medal for outstanding services to medicine in 2020, having spent over 25 years practicing Emergency Medicine. Tony joined Council in May 2023.



DR ANTONIO DI DIO
Antonio is a health executive and clinician in Canberra. He has been a GP for 30 years and is the Acting Director of the Professional Services Review. He is a past state president of the AMA-ACT and has served and continues to do so on many Boards, Councils, Committees and Advisory Groups. He has volunteered for over 25 years in Doctor's Health, currently serving on the board of the national organisation Drs4Drs, as well as actively serving the ACT Drs4Drs in many roles. He sits on the National Leadership Alliance for Drs Health and well-being and the Primary Care Committee of the ACSQHC. He rejoined Council in July 2023.



DR GLEN FARROW
Glen is a healthcare executive, general and paediatric surgeon. Having spent many years in Director roles at Royal North Shore, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and Sydney Children's Hospital Network as well as being deployed on several occasions with the ADF as a surgeon and health element commander, he has been exposed to the special circumstances of doctors experiencing difficulty. He is also Director of Bearing Group, who focus in human factors and patient safety, and a Board member of the Tresillian Family Health Centres. Glen joined Council in May 2020.



DR PAUL HOSIE
Paul recently retired, having predominantly worked in General Practice in Northern NSW for most of his career. He was a VMO at Ballina Hospital and provided in-patient and obstetric care, as well as accident and emergency duties. Paul was also the State Medical Officer and Police Medical Officer for the Ballina district. More recently, Paul and his family moved to Sydney where he worked for seven years as a GP in Sydney's Northern Suburbs, and then spent four years working for Bupa in immigration medicine. Paul joined Council in August 2021.



DR SONIA HENRY
Sonia is a GP who works in remote parts of NSW and Australia. She is also a writer and an advocate for junior doctor well-being. Her debut novel *Going Under* was a great success and her second book *Put your Feet in the Dirt, Girl* has seen her projected into media stardom. She is a keynote speaker on issues facing younger and remote doctors. Sonia has also written for the *SMH*, *Kevin MD*, *The Australian*, *The Canberra Times* and *RM Williams Magazine*. Sonia joined Council in August 2021.



DR NATALIE KLEES
Natalie currently works as a Medical Advisor for the NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Rural Doctors Network, having completed her Fellowship with the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators in 2021. She has previously held a diverse range of clinical and non-clinical roles across rural, regional, and metropolitan NSW. Natalie has a strong interest in education and training, having worked as a tutor, lecturer, examiner and facilitator with Southern Cross University, the University of Newcastle, the University of New England, and the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators during her career. Natalie joined Council in November 2022.

"It's wonderful to see the impact that the MBA NSW-ACT has had on so many lives, and that after 127 years it remains an organisation run for doctors by doctors. It's an honour and a privilege to work with such a committed and passionate team to support the well-being of doctors in NSW and the ACT."

– DR NATALIE KLEES



DR VANESSA ROGERS
Vanessa works as a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and sits as a part-time member of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal. Vanessa strongly believes it is important to help support her medical colleagues and their families in times of hardship and crisis. Vanessa has had various roles on Council since she joined in 2013.



DR FURIO VIRANT OAM
Furio is a partner in a GP practice in Southwest Sydney, Life Member of RACGP and a Surveyor for AGPAL who audit medical practices. His career includes serving for the RAN and being on various boards. He has been a conjoint lecturer in General Practice at Western Sydney University and a clinical Associate in General Practice at Sydney University. Furio has been on Council since 1994 and was awarded an OAM in 2022 for services to the medical profession.



DR CATHERINE BRASSILL
Catherine graduated from UNSW and gained her experience working in several hospitals in Sydney for seven years. She has spent the last 39 years as a GP running a practice on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. Catherine joined Council in 2009.



DR VINCENT WONG
Vincent is a Senior Staff Specialist and Director of Diabetes and Endocrine Service at Liverpool and Fairfield Hospitals. He is also the Liverpool Lead for the Diabetes, Obesity Metabolism Translational Research Unit – an academic unit in SWSLHD. He is Conjoint Assoc. Prof at the South Western Sydney Clinical School at UNSW and is involved in teaching medical students, registrars and other clinical staff. Vincent joined Council in 1998.



DR IAN WECHSLER
Ian is an Ophthalmologist who joined Council in 2011. Like all our Council members, Ian wanted to give back to the profession which had been so good to him. His parents came to Australia as overseas trained doctors, so he can identify with this sector of practitioners and has observed firsthand the difficulties experienced in obtaining local Australian medical qualifications.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Council and staff of MBA NSW-ACT would like to take this opportunity to thank all our funding partners and donors who together, enable us to continue our vital work. Your donation not only helps us support the doctors and their families in crisis, but it also sends an important message of camaraderie to them. They often comment that your support helps them feel "less alone at this low point in their lives", and it helps them immensely to know that their colleagues genuinely care.

GRANTS

Represented 30% of our income
(up from 15% in 2022)

- NSW Government (Department of Communities and Justice) – NGO Flood Support Grant
- Medical Council of NSW
- Avant Mutual Group
- The AMA Charitable Foundation
- AbbVie Pty Ltd

GROUP DONATIONS

Represented 13% of our income
(up from 6% in 2022)

Hospital Medical Staff Council Donations

- Royal Hospital for Women
- Royal North Shore
- Royal Prince Alfred
- St George
- Ryde
- Westmead

Other Group Donations

- VivCourt Trading
- Kuring-gai District Medical Association
- DocsVox – NSW Doctors Choir
- USYD Reunion – Medical Class of 1967
- USYD Reunion – Medical Class of 1972
- USYD Reunion – Medical Class of 1977
- USYD Reunion – Medical Class of 1993
- Yarira Health Care
- Scentre Group
- Donations in memory of the late Dr Mark Henschke

BEQUESTS

Represented 2% of our income
(up from 0.6% in 2022)

- Estate of the late Nola Dawn Manickam (a previous beneficiary)
- Estate of the late Dr Frank Keston

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

Accounted for 39% of our income

The kindness and compassion shown by our individual supporters and donors is humbling. Your generosity combined to provide \$213,521, which represented 39% of our income. Unfortunately, we only have space to recognise those who donated over \$1,000 in this financial year, however, please know that we do value and appreciate every single donation, no matter how small as it is "together that we make a difference". Many of our donors prefer not to be recognised and we have honoured their request.

LARGER MORE SIGNIFICANT DONATIONS

- Dr Jennifer and Mr John Douglas
- Dr Patrick Rundle
- Dr Robyn Fried
- Dr Prithipal Gill
- Dr Arne Schimmelfeder
- Dr Solman Bezyan

"Simply put, I try to live by The Golden Rule, Hippocratic Principles and The Scout Law. To my mind it is a privilege to be able to help others in need, I see it as a duty... Rest assured, MBA NSW-ACT will continue to receive my support as long as I live." –

A LONG-TERM DONOR OF MBA NSW-ACT

"I don't say this lightly, but if it wasn't for what you and the board have done for me, I would not be alive today. I will forever be grateful for your compassion and support"

– MBA NSW-ACT RECIPIENT

FUNDING PARTNERS



SERVICE PARTNERS

In addition to our funding partners we also work closely and are thankful for our key service delivery partners who provide very vital support to our beneficiaries and to our organisation on a pro-bono basis



\$1,000 AND OVER DONATIONS LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Dr Michael Allam | Dr Richard Ho | Dr Jennifer Moss |
| Dr Jacqueline Blomfield | Dr Elisabeth Hodson | Dr Frances Newman |
| Dr Antony Bolton | Dr Terry Holland | Dr Brian Pezzutti |
| Dr Catherine Brassill | Dr Theresa Jacques | Dr Tom Justin Playfair |
| Dr Dan Brettell | Dr Anne Jaumees | Dr Robyn Raffles |
| Dr William Brooks | Dr Tatiana Jelihovsky | Dr James Raleigh |
| Dr Katherine M Brown | Dr Richard W Lehmann | Dr Michael Reid |
| Dr Mairead Browne | Dr Joyce May-Lin Liew | Dr Peter Roger |
| Dr Christopher Canaris | Dr Lynette Liew | Dr George Skowronski |
| Dr Edward Chow | Dr Jonathan Livesey | A/Prof Vladan Starcevic |
| Dr David Collinson | Dr Therese Lovell | Dr Peter Taylor |
| A/Prof Paul Darveniza | Mr Andy Mak | A/Prof David van der Poorten |
| Dr Ian Fagg | A/Prof Jarad Martin | Dr Pauline Warburton |
| Dr Andrew Gatenby | Dr Catherine Mason | Dr Florian Wertenaue |
| Dr Alan Gunn | Dr Linda McQueen and Dr Phillip Harvey | Dr Andrew Wines |
| A/Prof Dr Mark Hersch | Dr Ian Miles | Dr James Wong |
| Dr Henry Hicks | | Prof Desmond Yip |
| Dr Mark Hertzberg | | |

"Thank you so much for your generous assistance this year. Financial stress is obviously just one aspect of severe illness, and some relief undoubtedly aids in improved well-being and hopefully recovery, I am profoundly grateful to your organisation." – MALE SPECIALIST, ACT



*"We doctors are fortunate to have the support
of MBA NSW-ACT when we need it most."*

— MALE GP, SYDNEY



MBA NSW · ACT
SUPPORTING DOCTORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

mbansw.org.au

Medical Benevolent Association of NSW-ACT

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