



MEDICAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NSW

MEET THE MBANSW COUNCIL

BY DOCTORS FOR DOCTORS

www.mbansw.org.au

OUR EXECUTIVE

MBANSW is managed by a Council of up to 20 registered medical practitioners who are the Directors of the Association. The Council meets monthly to oversee the affairs of the Association and consider requests for assistance.



PRESIDENT

Dr Chris Dalton

Chris joined the MBA Council in 2000 and was elected President in November 2019, having also served as Treasurer for a few years. Chris is an ENT surgeon and still in active clinical practice, although no longer operating. He has worked in Western Sydney for most of his ENT career. In 2012 he moved into the corporate world and currently works as the Medical Director for BUPA. Chris also teaches medical students part-time at Macquarie University and has completed his Master of Public Health and Master of Biostatistics at the University of Sydney to further his special interest in biostatistics and epidemiology.

Of his work with the Council Chris comments:

"I have found the work of the MBA to be very rewarding and have learnt much from the councillors who have come and gone over the years. It has been particularly gratifying to see the practical benefits the Council has been able to give to the doctors who call on our help, and to see many of them get back on their feet and back to work in the medical community."



VICE PRESIDENT

Dr Andrew Wines

Andrew is an Orthopaedic Surgeon who specialises in the ankle and foot and works in a number of Northern Sydney hospitals. As a third-generation Councillor, he joined MBANSW in 1994 as a young intern. In 2003 he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to assess the support services available to doctors and their families in times of crisis. He also served as Hon. Secretary for five years prior to being appointed as Vice-President in 2020.

Of his work with the Council Andrew comments:

"The care of doctors has been important to me and my family for a number of generations. In 2003 I was able to travel to the United Kingdom and Ireland as a Churchill Fellow to assess support services available to doctors and their families in times of crisis. During my time on the Council of the MBA of NSW I have been delighted to have been part of the process that doctors of NSW and ACT have been able to rely on in times of their own personal crises. The financial and emotional support provided by the MBA of NSW has made an enormous difference to some of our colleagues and their families at a time when it has been needed most. For the relatively modest commitment of time that is required to be a member of the MBA Council, the rewards are great and I would encourage duly qualified doctors to consider joining the MBA of NSW."



HON. SECRETARY

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 in May 2020 and was elected to the position of Hon. Secretary in November 2020.

Of his work with the Council Glen comments:

"I enjoy being on Council as it gives me an opportunity to use my years of varying experiences to help professional colleagues. Changing someone's career trajectory for the better, really does help improve their life and circumstances."

OUR EXECUTIVE (CONT)



HON.TREASURER

Dr Glenn McNally

Glenn is a specialist Obstetrician & 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. Glenn trained in Sydney, Glasgow and Vancouver. He has served on many boards and committees including time spent as President of the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine. He has a long-standing interest in education and improving general standards of practice in diagnostic imaging. Glenn joined the Council in early 2020 and was appointed to Hon. Treasurer in November 2021.

Of his work with the Council Glenn comments:

"I've been fortunate in life in most respects, but know that misfortune can affect any of us and without warning. Support from family, friends and colleagues is helpful, but support from an organisation like the MBANSW can be a godsend, as it is provided confidentially and without judgement and by people who specialise in helping doctors. The association has been in existence for over 125 years, providing this necessary support for medical practitioners and their families. Our activities are implemented by highly skilled social workers who are supported by a Council of volunteer medical practitioners, who give of their time and commitment freely. Whilst a Councillors contribution is relatively small, the reward is great in seeing a colleague supported in their time of need. I would encourage others to consider a role on the Council as I believe it is part of the obligation that we all have to each other."

OUR COUNCILLORS



Dr Catherine Brassill

Since she was a small child, Catherine always wanted to be a doctor in order to help people. She followed this calling and graduated from UNSW and then got her experience in a number of hospitals in Sydney over a seven-year period. At the same time, she was raising a family and so decided that General Practice was her best option. Catherine has spent the last 39 years as a GP running a practice on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. Catherine joined the Council in 2009.

Of her work with the Council Catherine comments:

"In General Practice you get to see a lot of life's complexities and doctors themselves are not immune from experiencing such issues. I feel that the work we do at MBANSW is very worthwhile. By providing a unique combination of emotional support with some short-term financial assistance at the right time, we can relieve the current stress levels enormously. This gives our beneficiary a much better chance of regaining their well-being earlier and moving towards independence again. I am very grateful to be on the Council as I feel it's work really does assist my colleagues and their families at their time of greatest need and it makes me feel good to be part of that."

OUR COUNCILLORS (CONT)



Dr Felix Choi

Felix graduated from the University of NSW 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. He has been involved in the education of General Practitioners on Skin Cancer Management. Felix has been a Councillor since 2007 and held the position of Hon. Treasurer from 2009-2019.

Of his work with the Council Felix comments:

"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 MBANSW has been a wonderful experience. During my time as Treasurer, I was able to help navigate the Association through the global financial crisis which helped me improve my financial skill set. It has also 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 Helen Freeborn

Helen is a Medical Administrator who currently holds the position of Deputy CEO for the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. Helen's background includes working as an emergency CMO in regional NSW hospitals. Helen completed her Masters of Health Management in 2020 at UNSW and is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She joined the Council in November 2016 and served as Treasurer between November 2019 and November 2021.

Of her work with the Council Helen comments:

"The well-being of our medical workforce is imperative and as a new fellow, I have an interest in supporting the future medical workforce, through contributing expertise on the issues that junior doctors face."



Dr Sonia Henry

Sonia is a GP who currently works in remote parts of NSW and Australia. She is also a writer and an advocate for junior doctor wellbeing. Her debut novel, "Going Under" was published by Allen and Unwin in 2019. Sonia has been invited to speak at a variety of medical events representing Avant, AMSA, the AMA, Melbourne Uni and has exposed the darker side of excessive working hours and the stress placed on young graduates and registrar. She has also written for the SMH, Kevin MD, The Australian, The Canberra Times and RM Williams Magazine. Sonia is passionate about bringing back kindness in medicine and also about Indigenous health. Sonia joined the Council in August 2021.

Of her work with the Council Sonia comments:

"I have always appreciated the direct-action approach of the MBANSW, rather than the lip service a lot of other organisations pay to doctors in crisis. I am excited to join such a credible charity and happy to represent younger doctors and those working in more remote areas. For me, it is another step in my ongoing advocacy for doctors and their families who need assistance and support and are often reluctant to ask".

OUR COUNCILLORS (CONT)



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. Paul was also a member of the Rural Doctors Association, RACGP, as well as a member of the Commonwealth government appointed committee analysing the performance of the Australian Divisions of General Practice network. 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 the Council in August 2021 and has helped the Council understand the unique pressures faced by GPs working in rural and regional areas of NSW and ACT.

Of his work with the Council Paul comments:

"Whilst practicing medicine allows a unique opportunity for job satisfaction and fulfilment, it can be associated with periods of considerable stress for the practitioner and their family. I feel very privileged to be part of an organisation that provides support and assistance for doctors and their families during these difficult times".



Dr Vanessa Rogers

Vanessa works as a consultation-liaison psychiatrist and sits as a part time member of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal. Vanessa has been on the MBANSW Council since 2013 and has served a term as Vice President. Vanessa strongly believes it is important to help support her medical colleagues and their families in times of hardship and crisis and enjoys working with such a diverse group of and talented and compassionate Councillors.

Of her work with the Council Vanessa comments:

"Nobody is immune to adversity, and I believe it is important to help support my colleagues and their families in times of hardship and crisis. I enjoy working with colleagues from diverse specialities who bring valuable knowledge and perspectives to the Council."



Dr Mark Selikowitz

Mark Selikowitz is a developmental paediatrician and was the Director of the Child Development Unit at Sydney Children's Hospital before establishing the Sydney Developmental Clinic in 1993. He is the author of over 65 original research articles published in international journals and has written four books on developmental disorders in childhood. Mark joined the Council in 2020 and values the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of colleagues in need.

Of his work with the Council Mark comments:

"Dealing with the families of children with developmental disorders has given me an appreciation of the stresses that many families face. I value the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of my colleagues in need. Doctors spend their lives helping others and it's important that they too are able to receive assistance when they face hardship."

OUR COUNCILLORS (CONT)



Dr Furio Virant

Furio is partner in a GP practice in Southwest Sydney, Life Member of RACGP and a Surveyor for AGPAL who audit medical practices. His extensive career includes serving for the RAN as well as being on various boards including AMANSW, ADGP and AGPAL. He was Chair of the General Practice Committee AMANSW and Fairfield Division of General Practice as well as being part of the Federal Government Professional Services Review Committee and the Medicare Participation Review Committee. He has been a conjoint lecturer in General Practice at Western Sydney University and a clinical Associate in General Practice at Sydney University and joined Council in 1995, serving a number of terms as Vice-President.

Of his work with the Council Furio comments:

"We as a profession are a family that helps others, but who helps us when we are in need? I have been inspired by the doctors on the Council since I joined in 1995. They come from all different specialties of medicine, but have in common 'the want' to help those less fortunate in our profession, and their families who had fallen on hard times. I still remember fondly those on the Council who have passed away, they have helped me to be who I am, more caring and more sympathetic for those in need."



Dr Ian Wechsler

Ian joined the council in 2011 after an extensive career as an Ophthalmologist. Like all the 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 and so he is able to identify with those trained overseas and has observed firsthand, the difficulties experienced in obtaining local Australian medical qualifications.

Of his work with the Council Ian comments:

"It is very gratifying to be part of the MBANSW Council. The Council is made up of a diverse group of doctors, who use their skills and experience to offer confidential support to colleagues in need. Medical practitioners are often relatively isolated and vulnerable. Not only do we provide counselling and social work support, we also assist with problem solving and advocacy if requested. In about two thirds of our beneficiaries, we also offer some short-term financial assistance. All of this helps the doctor and their family to navigate through the crisis. It is particularly satisfying when the Council has subsequent feedback from a fully recovered colleague who has returned to professional practice."



Dr Vincent Wong

Vincent graduated from USyd and pursued specialist training in Endocrinology at Westmead Hospital. He attained his PhD in 2005 and is currently, 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. His research interests include thyroid cancer, gestational diabetes, diabetic cardiomyopathy and diabetic retinopathy. Vincent joined the Council in 1998 and has previously served as Hon. Treasurer.

Of his work with the Council Vincent comments:

"We never know what life brings, and we all face our challenges and moments of difficulty. The MBA is like a family that helps colleagues in times of crisis, and being on the Council is the perfect way to give back to a profession that has provided me with so much."