

Medical Benevolent Association of NSW

CARING FOR DOCTORS

We've been looking after doctors and their families in NSW and the ACT for more than 125 years offering confidential financial assistance and counselling support.



The Medical Benevolent Association of NSW (MBANSW) is a registered charity that began more than 125 years ago with the mission of supporting doctors experiencing any form of crisis. Our aim is to provide independent and confidential counselling to doctors in NSW and the ACT, as well as short-term financial assistance if required, to ensure the doctor has a better chance of regaining well-being and returning to their vocation. We assist practising, retired and non-practising doctors, as well as medical students and their families.

Doctors dedicate their lives to helping others but they are not immune to serious illness, family tragedy, accidents, domestic violence, bullying and harassment, addiction, financial issues and mental health problems. We have helped many thousands of doctors over our 125 years in operation. This brochure details some Case Studies, so as to bring to life the human side of our work and the capacity of the MBANSW to make a real difference.

**The names and images have been changed to protect the confidentiality of our beneficiaries.*

CASE STUDIES

Alecia, Registrar

In her late 30s, Alecia had everything going for her. She was a busy, happy doctor, a wife and mum and only a few months short of qualifying as a specialist in a regional NSW hospital. However, things began to unravel when she filed a harassment complaint against her older, more established male supervisor. The complaint was upheld but to her astonishment, Alecia had to continue reporting to him. There was no official reprimand. Her supervisor reacted by alleging Alecia was underperforming, despite all her previous work being exemplary. Seeing the writing on the wall, Alecia moved her family back to Sydney to seek alternative employment.

However, just as she relocated, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Finding a job proved difficult. With no income, the family was now in financial distress.

"To be honest, I approached the MBANSW without much hope. I had lost my employment and my harassment complaint wasn't taken seriously. It seemed like the end of the world," said Alecia.



MBANSW successfully advocated for Alecia to prospective employers to consider job references from other senior colleagues. The MBANSW also provided short term financial assistance to help the family meet its basic needs, while she had no income. The MBANSW also supported her emotionally during her 15 month journey. Alecia is now happily employed at a new hospital and loves her work.

“*Advocacy from MBANSW really changed the trajectory of my career. It is my endeavour to be the best doctor I can to return the level of care that I received.*”

CASE STUDIES

Mike, Specialist

Shortly after setting up his private practice, Mike's world came crashing down. A diagnosis of lymphoma meant he had to begin urgent treatment. He stopped work as a specialist immediately. The treatment's side effects were so debilitating that Mike's life was put on hold. His heavily pregnant wife struggled to take responsibility for day-to-day financial matters. Feeling he'd let his patients and his family down, Mike was overwhelmed with anxiety about his growing family's financial position. As their situation worsened, Mike contacted the MBANSW for practical and emotional support.

To give Mike and his wife the reprieve they desperately needed,



MBANSW provided social work support and financial assistance to help cover essential living costs including energy bills, health fund payments and council rates. This support relieved some of the pressure allowing Mike to focus on recovery. Mike is now easing back into work after two clear scans. For this doctor, and so many others we support, the fact that his peers were willing to consider his circumstances and support his family, no matter what, is worth so much.

Laura, GP, mother of two

Laura was working as a full-time GP when her husband was in a terrible car accident. John was left with extensive injuries that required multiple surgeries, extended hospitalisation and more than a year of rehabilitation. It was going to be months until John was well enough to return to work as an oncologist.

With no family to lean on, Laura had no choice but to reduce to part-time hours to care for John and their children. Her reduced salary was barely covering basic living expenses for the family of four, let alone the running costs of John's practice. Their savings quickly ran out.



When a concerned friend referred Laura to our social workers, she was reluctant to ask for help. "I felt like a failure. The first phone call was the hardest but it was all confidential and there was absolutely no judgement," said Laura. MBANSW provided short term financial support while Laura and John waited for the first insurance payment. Our social worker gave the emotional support they desperately needed to get back on their feet.

"You don't ever think you'll need to ask for help, until you realise you have no choice."

Martin, Registrar, father

While you'd be forgiven for thinking doctors have the ultimate job security, the global pandemic tells a different story for father-of-two Martin.

When COVID-19 forced the indefinite cancellation of elective surgeries, Martin's income stopped.

"Overnight my income stopped and everything in my life became uncertain," said Martin.

Government support was provided to thousands of Australians, but Martin was ineligible. He experienced difficulty accessing his superannuation, and his landlord refused to negotiate his rent.

With two children to home school, bills mounting by the day



and his work significantly reduced, Martin didn't know which way to turn. Suddenly everything that was once so clear had changed and he felt helpless, anxious and lost. MBANSW helped with Martin's utility bills and cleared his rental arrears. Working together, we reduced the uncertainty for his family during one of the most unprecedented times in medical history.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like more information about MBANSW please contact us on (02) 9987 0504 or via support@mbansw.org.au

If you wish to support your medical colleagues in need with a tax deductible donation please go to our website www.mbansw.com.au or contact us on 02 9987 0504 or finance@mbansw.org.au

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