

I am passionate about the future of General Practice and believe the foundation of this future lies in the GP registrars who are set to take over the reigns of the profession. It is therefore of utmost importance to me that the GP Registrar voice on the RACGP board is vocal, is heard and is listened to.

I am a recent fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners having received my fellowship in early 2018. I entered the AGPT program in 2015 choosing to remain in the hospital for a further twelve months before starting community General Practice terms in 2016 with General Practice Training Queensland (GPTQ). I have worked across three General Practices in Queensland including an Aboriginal Medical Service.

In 2016, when starting my community GP terms I took on the role of hub Registrar Liaison Officer for GPTQ. This role gave me the opportunity to work in an advocacy and support role for my General Practice Term 1 and 2 peers. I was subsequently appointed to the position of corporate Registrar Liaison Officer in November of 2016 and took an active role on the General Practice Registrars Australia (GPRA) Advisory Council. I have remained in these roles since.

Through my role as Registrar Liaison Officer I am frequently contacted by registrars who have questions, concerns or complaints about a broad range of training related topics including their practice, employment conditions, training requirements or Regional Training Organisation. I offer advice and support and often take on a pastoral care role. I participate in feedback meetings with my Regional Training Organisation (RTO) as a way of raising awareness of current issues facing registrars, implementing change and ultimately bringing about improvement. I regularly attend and present at RTO and other key stakeholder events including RTO information days, orientation, AGPT information events, hospital career nights and junior doctor education.

I have attended the biannual GPRA Advisory Council meetings in 2017 and 2018 as well as the GPRA Strategic Summit in 2017. I am in regular communication with GPRA and the Advisory Council and have therefore been able to vocalise the local registrar plight at a national level as well as appreciate issues that registrars face in other training districts. I have taken advantage of this platform to take an active interest in issues facing registrars at a national level, providing feedback in these areas as well as being involved in specific working parties looking at the registrar benchmarking survey in 2017, AGPT policy review and most recently the NTCER negotiations.

As a recent registrar myself and now with over two years experience as a Registrar Liaison Officer I have developed a deep understanding of the registrar experience and issues currently facing registrars. I am acutely aware of the uncertainty amongst current and future registrars with the transition of training back to the colleges. Whilst the opportunity for improvement with this transition is great especially with regards to consistent delivery of high quality training nationwide, pooling of resources and increased support services there is significant concern at the individual level about how the transition will impact on training. Registrars must be protected, training must promote clinical excellence and generation of well rounded, competent Fellows and the Colleges must be able to accommodate the ever

changing needs of registrars across the diverse landscape of the nation from metropolitan to rural to remote.

Whilst I acknowledge that there are many practices and supervisors across the nation doing an amazing job of supporting registrar training, I am also acutely aware of the difficulties some registrars face in their day to day clinical setting. Many registrars feel under-supported on entering General Practice terms, faced with the isolation and clinical autonomy experienced, often for the first time, in the General Practice setting. I commonly field concerns from registrars about inadequate supervision and teaching within their practices and see the flow on effect of this on registrar wellbeing and burn out. I believe firmly that more must be done to improve the individual registrar experience by supporting practices and supervisors to provide an optimal learning environment. And we must ensure that only good quality practices are accredited for registrar placements whilst balancing the need to have adequate places for the increasing registrar numbers.

Inconsistencies in training, provision of education and exam support across the country remain a huge problem facing registrars. Many registrars feel they receive inadequate support and guidance in the lead up to College exams. Whilst RTOs attempt to fill this gap it can be inconsistent both within and between RTOs. Certainly across the country, there are huge disparities in what support is received by registrars. There are minimal college endorsed resources when it comes to exam technique despite the Key Feature Problems exam being well recognised as a highly technique driven exam and no reliable avenue to seek feedback on exam preparedness before the day from the Colleges itself. This has the potential to significantly impact on performance as well as registrar wellbeing. Registrars also report inadequate feedback post exam failures and therefore difficulty in obtaining insight into how to improve for subsequent sittings.

I am passionate about improving the employment conditions of registrars as I believe there are significant disparities between GP registrar and hospital specialty registrar employment conditions. Base rates of pay for first term General Practice registrars are lower than Hospital based registrars and, in fact, are lower than hospital based resident medical officers in many Australian states. Furthermore, hospital based doctors in training receive a number of entitlements that GP registrars do not receive such as professional development and study leave. Publicly employed hospital based doctors are also entitled to paid maternity leave, which GP registrars for the most part cannot access through their employers. These factors pose a significant financial disincentive for junior doctors wanting to pursue a career in General Practice. They can also significantly impact on GP registrar wellbeing especially when registrars are forced into using their annual leave for study or professional development purposes.

Becoming a parent recently has given me insight into the struggles of doctors in training managing work, study and family commitments. I have seen how some registrars can be disadvantaged due to their unique family situation and seen the inflexibility in some working conditions and training requirements. Despite General Practice being promoted as the pen-ultimate of flexible career choices in medicine and providing great work life balance, this is often not something experienced on the ground by GP registrars especially

when it comes to parental leave, part time working arrangements, exams, breastfeeding considerations and child care.

I remain committed to and deeply passionate about improving the training experience of GP registrars so as to foster excellence in primary healthcare delivery in Australia. I have seen firsthand the impact that the inherent power imbalance, whether real or perceived, between supervisors and registrars, RTOs and registrars and the colleges and registrars has in dampening the registrar voice. Through a position on the RACGP board as registrar representative I aim to keep the registrar voice strong and ensure improvements in the training experience of registrars, Australia wide.