



RACGP

# GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee Report

November 2024



## **GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee Report**

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.*



# Contents

- 1 Report from our Chair
- 2 RACGP GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee
- 3 Key achievements and next steps
- 4 Every doctor, every setting: pillars for coordinated action and key targets\*
- 5 GPs in Training Faculty report
- 6 Outcomes
- 7 Wellbeing Initiatives log
- 9 Member spotlight – Dr Vivin Thomas Mathew

# Report from our Chair

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the voice of general practitioners (GPs) in our growing cities and throughout rural and remote Australia. For more than 60 years, we have supported the backbone of Australia's health system by setting the standards for education and practice, advocating for better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

Australia's GPs see more than two million patients each week, with the scope of general practice unmatched among medical professionals. The RACGP recognises the importance of ensuring that the health and wellbeing of GPs in Training are supported at every stage of their learning journey, and is committed to eradicating the stigmas surrounding doctors seeking support for burnout, fatigue and depression.

The GPs in Training (GPiT) Wellbeing Committee was established in late 2023 as a joint initiative of the GPiT Faculty and the GP Training Business Unit. Meeting every two months, the committee is composed of practicing GPs, medical educators, current registrars and RACGP staff.

The RACGP believes that all GP trainees should be well supported professionally and in their personal welfare as they train to reach their full potential as GPs, allowing them to provide the highest quality of care to their patients. The safety and wellbeing of GPiT are crucially important.

The Wellbeing Committee will:

- Inform the GP Training Business Unit of priorities to improve or assist the safety and wellbeing of GPiT.
- Ensure a focus on issues of racism, bullying and harassment.
- Consider the wellbeing and safety of GPiT as part of the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of RACGP training programs and their policies and procedures that impact GPiT.
- Submit a yearly workplan that includes goals, targets and outcomes, then review its effectiveness.
- Provide an annual report.

One of the first achievements of the committee was successfully advocating for the RACGP to sign up to the [Every Doctor, Every Setting: a national framework to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students](#). Established in December 2023, this framework will assist the RACGP in reporting its outcomes.

As Chair, I am grateful for the support of the staff at RACGP and the committee, and I am pleased to present our 2024 annual report on the progress towards supporting the health and wellbeing of doctors.

## Dr Vanessa Moran

Chair of the GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee  
RACGP National Deputy Director of Training



## Dr Phillipa Eastwood

*After one year of the committee, it's great to see that we have achieved so much, most notably the program logic, which is now being used in practice by a working group. I love that our ideas are not just being spoken about but are actually being implemented to make real improvements to GP training, which was the entire reason we started.*

# RACGP GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee

*“All GP trainees should be well supported professionally and in their personal welfare by the RACGP as they train to achieve their full potential as GPs so they may provide the highest quality of care to their patients. The safety and wellbeing of GPiT is crucially important.”*

– GPiT Wellbeing Committee mission statement

## Committee Members

Dr Vanessa Moran	Chair	National Deputy Director of Training	Newcastle, NSW
Ms Rachael Norris	Deputy Chair	Senior Evaluation Officer	Newcastle, NSW
Dr Ariel Yam	Committee member	Registrar	Wollongong, NSW
Dr Emmon Mubbashir	Committee member	Remote Vocational Training Scheme Registrar and Registrar Liaison Officer	Katanning, WA
Dr Faizy Kakkat	Committee member	Registrar	Belmore, NSW
Dr Jenni Parsons	Committee member	Medical Educator/Supervisor	Port Fairy, VIC
Dr Jim Dell'Oro	Committee member	Registrar	Geelong, VIC
Dr Leonie Ross	Committee member	Supervisor	Malvern East, VIC
Dr Lucy Hurlstone	Committee member	Supervisor	Darwin, NT
Dr Muhammad Raza	Committee member	Fellowship Support Program Registrar and Registrar Liaison Officer	Drouin, VIC
Dr Najia Adnan	Committee member	Registrar	Perth, WA
Dr Philippa Eastwood	Committee member	Registrar	Launceston, TAS
Dr Rebecca Gough	Committee member	Aboriginal Registrar and Registrar Medical Educator	Dubbo, NSW
Dr Rebecca Lock	Committee member	National Lead Medical Educator – Australian Defence Force	Sunshine Coast, QLD
Dr Ruth Eagles	Committee member	Medical Educator and Supervisor	Townsville, QLD
Dr Vivin Thomas Mathew	Committee member	Supervisor and previous Practice Experience Program Trainee	Newcastle, NSW
Dr W D R Himashi Pemasiri	Committee member	Registrar	Adelaide, SA
Mr Ari Traucki	RACGP staff member	GPiT Member Engagement Officer	Adelaide, SA
Claire Jones	RACGP staff member	Medical Education Support Officer	Brisbane, QLD
Sally Clapp	RACGP staff member	Faculty Manager GPiT	Adelaide, SA

# Key achievements and next steps

The establishment of the RACGP GPs in Training Wellbeing committee was a key achievement in progressing the work of doctors' health and wellbeing, and addressing bullying, racism and harassment.

Further achievements of the committee were:

- Successfully advocating for the RACGP as a training organisation to re-sign up to the **Every Doctor, Every Setting: a national framework to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students** in December 2023.
- Reviewing key evaluations of the training program to make recommendations on improvements to enhance registrar wellbeing.
- Developing a program logic with key initiatives and outcomes for doctors wellbeing.
- Advocating for the establishment of a working group in the RACGP to scope, pilot and roll out a National Registrar Wellbeing Program for all registrars training with the RACGP.
- Reviewing material for publication to raise awareness of doctors health and wellbeing to GPiT.

## The Wellbeing Committee will continue its work in 2025 and will have the following objectives:

- Review and provide feedback on the work of the Registrar Wellbeing Program Working Group.
- Review and provide input into policies and procedures that impact registrar wellbeing.
- Review GP training evaluations and provide recommendations to the RACGP.
- Provide an annual report on its work in relation to the **Every Doctor, Every Setting: a national framework to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students**.
- Hear from key industry leaders on doctors' health and well being to inform the Committee of evidence based and innovative ideas to support registrars in training.



**Dr Faizy Kakkat**

*Being a part of the GP Registrar Wellbeing Committee has been a thoroughly rewarding experience. One of my main motivations behind joining the committee was to make a difference to every current and future registrar by improving their wellbeing and ensuring they are well supported from the very first minute they walk into that consult room.*



**Dr Lucy Hurlstone**

*I look forward to continuing the committee's work in crystallising a plan of action next year. I hope to see a rollout of resources for all training pathways, as well as for supervisors and the wider community of GPs. I look forward to continuing to advocate for wellbeing resources to be included in mandatory registrar training and for the uncoupling of wellbeing from medical education.*

# Every doctor, every setting: pillars for coordinated action and key targets\*

## Primary prevention

Improve training and work environments to reduce risk:

- 1.1 Systems change to prevent job strain, fatigue, and burnout across the medical profession.
- 1.2 Safe and inclusive training and work environments, where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated.

## Secondary prevention

Improve capacity to recognise and respond to those needing support:

- 2.1 Mandatory reporting legislation exempts treating doctors from reporting their doctor or medical student patients.
- 2.2 The medical profession is empowered to better identify and respond to mental ill-health and suicidal behaviour.
- 2.3 Doctors and medical students at increased risk of mental ill-health and suicide are supported across settings.
- 2.4 Effective pathways to evidence-based care are available to the medical profession.

## Tertiary prevention

Improve response to doctors and medical students impacted by mental ill- health and suicidal behaviour:

- 3.1 Recovery-at-work practices are implemented across all settings where medical professionals work, study, and train.
- 3.2 An effective postvention response system is built to support doctors and medical students following suicidal behaviour.

## Mental health promotion

Improve the culture of the medical profession to enable wellbeing:

- 4.1 Strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of the medical profession are implemented.
- 4.2 Leaders and supervisors are developed to support the wellbeing of doctors and medical students.

## Leadership

Improve coordinated action and accountability:

- 5.1 A national leadership group is resourced to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the framework.
- 5.2 Mechanisms for effective communication about policy, practice and research are established.
- 5.3 An adequately resourced research and evaluation strategy is developed and implemented.

\*From Every Doctor, Every Setting: a national framework to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students.



# GPs in Training Faculty report

The GPs in Training Faculty has collaborated with the GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee to achieve several improvements to supporting the wellbeing of GPs in training over the past year. The GPs in Training Faculty acknowledges the significant role that the Wellbeing Committee has played in influencing improvement in policies, advocacy and registrar support and looks forward to building on this work together in the new year.

In response to the recommendations made by the GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee and the GPs in Training Faculty Council, we have implemented a number of initiatives and made progress toward the priorities identified in the program logic, including:

- Running psychological exam support webinars for registrars, which we plan to continue in 2025.
- Offering additional MDO registrar specific education webinars to address the education gaps identified by the committee.
- Advocating for a review of financial hardship processes for exams and collaborating with other business units to improve our support systems at the RACGP.
- Improving equity of access to exam support resources across training programs.
- Increasing awareness and promoting the recruitment of Registrar Liaison Officer roles across training regions to support the pastoral care of registrars.
- Advocating for federal government support for GPs in Training by increasing funding to improve pay parity, access to paid parental leave and study leave entitlements.
- Providing input, expertise, advice and representation from registrars in government submissions, consultation papers and on committees, panels and advisory groups across the RACGP, which impact on registrar wellbeing.

In the new year, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the GP Training Business Unit, the GPiT Wellbeing Committee and the Registrar Wellbeing Program working group to support the delivery of the program logic, with particular focus on improving registrar wellbeing across all RACGP training programs.

## Ms Sally Clapp

Faculty Manager GPs in Training



## Dr Rebecca Gough







*I had never been involved in something like the Wellbeing Committee before, so I was a bit unsure about how the processes actually worked to make a difference for trainees. Over time, through the meetings, it has become more apparent that teasing out issues and ideas is a more complex task than I initially thought, and that it is an important process to undertake as part of instilling future change in large organisations like the RACGP. It's definitely far more nuanced than I expected, and it has provided me with education and experience regarding how groups and committees function to implement changes on an organisational level.*



# Outcomes

The following table outlines the outcomes identified by the RACGP GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee that need to be addressed to meet the pillars for coordinated action and key targets, along with their current progress.

We have used a traffic light system to indicate whether the milestones and due dates have been met or are expected to be met (green traffic light), are behind schedule (amber traffic light) or cannot be met or are significantly delayed (red traffic light).

Outcome	Status	Due Date	Pillar	Completed initiatives associated with this outcome
1 Establish a GPiT Wellbeing Committee to facilitate collaboration between key RACGP stakeholders, the GP in Training Faculty and GP Training Business Unit to advance improvements in registrar health and wellbeing.		Completed	All	WI001, WI016
2 RACGP will solidify its commitment to the <a href="#">Every Doctor, Every Setting Framework</a> as a training organisation.		Completed	All	WI005, WI022
3 The GPiT Wellbeing Committee has a structured approach to developing ideas and initiatives to present to the RACGP.		Completed	All	WI003, WI007
4 The GPiT Wellbeing Committee reviews and provides feedback on key registrar and supervisor evaluations to inform its initiatives and recommendations to RACGP.		Completed	Primary, Secondary Prevention and Mental Health Promotion	WI009, WI010
5 A holistic and nationally consistent resource is developed for GPiT (and preferably all RACGP members) and is evaluated for its effectiveness.		In Progress	Primary, Secondary Prevention and Mental Health Promotion	WI011, WI012, WI018
6 A Registrar Wellbeing Program Working Group is established to advance the GPiT Wellbeing Committee initiatives.		Completed	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary Prevention and Mental Health Promotion	WI013, WI017

# Wellbeing Initiatives log

The table below lists the completed initiatives to date linked to the desired outcomes that directly contribute to improved health and wellbeing. This log will be further expanded as the initiatives currently in progress are completed.

Wellbeing Initiative No	Initiative type	Description of initiative	Committee Meeting	Linked Outcome	Completion date	Targets
WI001	The GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee was formed.	GPiT Wellbeing Committee was founded in partnership between the GPiT Faculty and the GP Training business unit.	September 2023	1	19 September 2023	5.1
WI003	Program Logic was introduced to the Wellbeing Committee agenda.	The program logic model visually demonstrates how each initiative works by linking activities to outputs and intended short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, highlighting the program's cause-and-effect relationships.	October 2023	3	31 October 2023	All
WI005	The CEO endorsed the <b>"Every Doctor, Every Setting: a national framework to guide coordinated action on the mental health of doctors and medical students."</b>	CEO Paul Wappett affirms that RACGP training supports the Framework.	November 2023	2	30 November 2023	All
WI007	Reviewed program logic and identified the prioritisation of impact areas.	The completion of the program logic is the major work of the Wellbeing Committee from its establishment to September 2024.	All meetings	3	Ongoing	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2
WI009	Reviewed the 2023 Ahpra Medical Training Survey.	The Committee identified five key action points for the RACGP Executive to consider: 1. Increase relocation support; 2. Address racism, bullying and harassment; 3. Increase access to flexible working arrangements; 4. Promote the availability of psychological support; 5. Improve exam feedback.	January 2024	4	27 February 2024	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1

**GPs in Training Wellbeing Committee Report**  
November 2024

<b>Wellbeing Initiative No</b>	<b>Initiative type</b>	<b>Description of initiative</b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Linked Outcome</b>	<b>Completion date</b>	<b>Targets</b>
WI010	Presented five key points to the Executive for consideration from the Ahpra Medical Training Survey.	The Wellbeing Committee Chair presented a paper to the RACGP Executive highlighting the five key points to consider.	January 2024	4	9 April 2024	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1
WI011	A wellbeing question was added to the AGPT registrar end of semester survey.	The usefulness of the RACGP resources: "How useful is the RACGP support for your wellbeing (part of Registrar Training Handbook)?"	March 2024	5	9 February 2024	4.1
WI012	Regional Training Organisation (RTO) material repurposed for the RACGP.	Collation of intellectual property from the RTOs to be used by the RACGP.	March 2024	5	28 March 2024	4.1, 4.2
WI013	Supported the establishment of a Registrar Wellbeing Program Working Group within the RACGP by submitting a business plan to RACGP Executive.	A project proposal was drafted by Wellbeing Committee Chair in May and approved by RACGP Executive in July.	May 2024	6	10 July 2024	All
WI016	The GPS in Training Wellbeing Committee website page was launched.	To provide information about the GPiT Wellbeing Committee.	May 2024	1	28 May 2024.	5.1
WI017	Planning and recruitment begin for the Registrar Wellbeing Program Working Group support roles: Project Coordinator and National Lead Medical Educator - Registrar Wellbeing.	National Lead Medical Educator for Registrar Wellbeing appointed - Dr Julie McClellan; Project Coordinator appointed - Maheshie Jayawickrama.	May, July and September 2024	6	1 September 2024.	All
WI018	A draft wellbeing resource was course created for the Wellbeing Committee review.	A draft course was created.	May 2024	5	28 May 2024.	4.1, 4.2
WI022	Update for the RACGP Education Workforce Committee.	The Wellbeing Committee Chair was invited to present an update on work being done to address bullying, harassment, discrimination or racism in GP training to the Education Workforce Committee – a sub-committee of the Board.	September 2024	2	10 September 2024.	1.2, 5.2

# Member spotlight – Dr Vivin Thomas Mathew



I joined the committee almost by chance, sending an email with no expectation of being selected. My passion for supporting non-mainstream GP trainees stems from my own experience. Without a supportive mentor, I wouldn't be where I am today, which drove me to become a peer supporter and guide for registrars facing challenges.

What I've learned is that initiating change isn't easy. It's a slow process involving many checks and approvals. However, it's crucial because general practice is unique. Unlike hospital medicine, we build long-term relationships with our trainees, often seeing them stay on as colleagues.

In general practice, it's not just about fixing issues for a few years; it's about nurturing relationships that can last a career. This is why I believe we need to focus on comprehensive, long-term solutions rather than quick fixes.

I'm particularly excited about our working group approach. It allows us to move quickly, as everyone knows each other well. We can implement ideas faster and then bring them back to the larger committee for approval. This method makes sense to me and feels like the right way to move forward.

Being part of this committee has shown me that while change is challenging, it's possible when we work together with a shared vision. We're not just training doctors; we're building the future of general practice, one relationship at a time.

**Dr Vivin Thomas Mathew**

## **Dr Ariel Yam**

*The committee's agenda to implement wellbeing strategies and improvements is continuing to progress. I have heard perspectives from other registrars, supervisors, medical educators and RACGP staff across the nation who are passionate on making the RACGP training program more supportive. In all decision making, we strive to keep everyone involved in RACGP training at the forefront of our minds, including trainees and supervisors in rural and remote locations, international medical graduates and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As someone from the latter group, I'm proud to be part of a committee that is dedicated to creating a safe space.*



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