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President

# Launching the AMA (NSW) Election Network

AMA (NSW) calls for the state to follow in the footsteps of other states and match Commonwealth funding not simply absorb it.

This is my first column as President of the AMA (NSW). I was honoured to be elected by the Council of the AMA (NSW) on 25 May 2010 and I am looking forward to the opportunity of serving the medical profession in this state. Fortunately I follow in the footsteps of excellent past Presidents including Brian Morton, Andrew Keegan, Choong-Siew Yong and John Gullotta, all of whom I regard as good friends and all of whom have contributed greatly to the AMA and to the health of our country overall and continue to be active members of Federal and/or State AMA Councils.

As you have been reading in *The NSW Doctor* and other media, 'elections' will be the big issue for 2010. All indications suggest a Federal election later this year and NSW is continuing its slow progress towards an election in March 2011.

AMA (NSW) has recently surveyed all hospital doctor members on your priorities for health for the NSW State election. We will also be asking you, our members, what you would like the AMA to focus on in the upcoming State and Federal elections. The NSW Budget showed us the Labour Government continues to fail to understand the importance of investing in our health system. Despite pre-COAG rhetoric about the need to increase the capacity of NSW public hospitals the recent state budget delivered only a 6.8 per cent recurrent funding increase, with all increases in capacity largely driven by COAG funding.

AMA (NSW) calls for the state to follow in the footsteps of other states and match Commonwealth funding not simply absorb it. NSW doctors, nurses and patients cannot wait any longer for money our hospitals urgently need.

Subject to feedback from you, the themes

of the AMA (NSW) Budget submission will remain the focus moving into the state election. NSW needs more capacity and transparent infrastructure planning. We need local control with involvement of local doctors and nurses. NSW must also allocate dedicated funds to providing the quarantined teaching time for DITs and their specialist supervisors.

While the AMA will continue to advocate for health at a state and federal level, every doctor can play their part in advocating for the system they want. Do you have a colleague who is always complaining about the health system?

We all have friends who practise what I call "aorta politics", that is they call you and say 'ey ought to do this' or 'ey ought to do that'. Well I say 'ey ought to get involved' because we all care about what is happening and we all want to see things improved. The only way to achieve this is to show solidarity and join us rather than just assuming we'll always be there to advocate for us all. Are your colleagues a member of the AMA (NSW)? If not, why not cut-out our membership application form on pages 35/36 of this issue of *The NSW Doctor* and forward to them, asking them to start making a difference.

If you are a member who is concerned please get involved in the AMA (NSW) election network. We will put you in touch with your local member (state and federal) and provide you with the information you need to explain to your local MPs and candidates why health should be the number one election issue. We will also ask for your feedback on the issues relevant to your speciality to ensure we feed concerns to all parties.

Get involved in the AMA (NSW) election network today. Email [sim@amansw.com.au](mailto:sim@amansw.com.au).