

A self-made success



RACGP GP of the Year
Dr Ayman Shenouda
recounts his journey from
Egyptian surgery to excellence
in general practice.

THE move was a personal thing. My dad is a powerful man, editor of one of the biggest journals in the country, and any success I had there could have been attributed to him. I wanted a change of lifestyle and I wanted to be more independent.

It was very difficult in the beginning. I struggled to get an attachment with a hospital. Back in Egypt, I was a surgeon with a master's in surgery.

Initially I never considered being a GP, not in Egypt and not here. I was following a traditional career path. I thought surgery offered the best way to help people, and was happy to pursue this. When I came to Australia, I was happy to continue this. I became a surgical

registrar at Launceston Hospital, and worked there for five years.

I eventually decided to move into general practice, and the first time I sat down for a consultation I felt like this was what I wanted to do. Just as the patient I had been seeing left the room, she said: "Thank you, Doctor. You've made me feel much better."

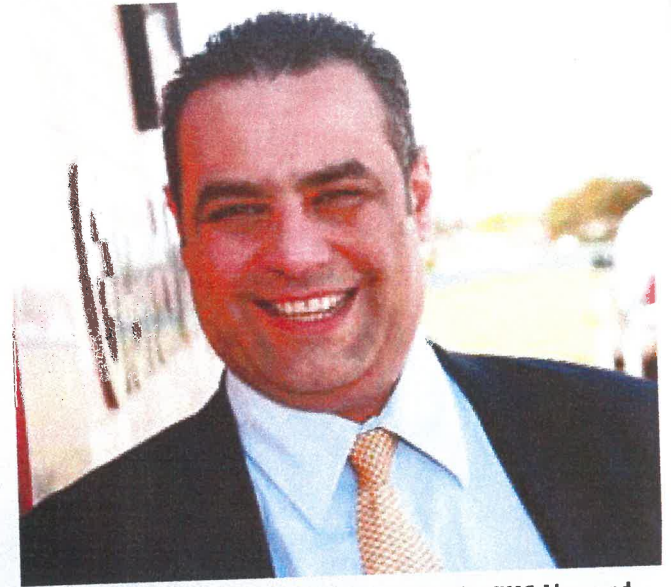
I decided I wanted to open my own practice. I opened the first one seven years ago. To do this I visited all of the practices that had won Practice of the Year awards.

We have eight doctors, seven of whom are full time. We also have five practice nurses, a psychologist, a dietitian, an exercise physiologist and a diabetic educator.

With our nurses, we help them identify areas they are interested in and help educate them in those areas. For example, we supported one nurse through a diabetic education course and she has since become our diabetes educator.

I think the idea of one-stop shops is what I am aiming for. I spent close to \$2 million on the practice, with no subsidy for that.

We run the Glenrock Country Practice, and also provide services to The Rock, which is a small country town about 25 minutes outside



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Wagga Wagga.

The patients are the best. I love consulting and I know they enjoy seeing me.

I have had some quite difficult experiences as an IMG, but then also some wonderful experiences. I think there needs to be more support for IMGs as a group – either the health services bring them here

and help them, or they do not bring them here at all. If you do not help them, then it is unfair for both the doctors and their patients.

We must not ignore people who are out there doing it quite hard, in some very isolated places. Instead of blaming them for mistakes, we should think of how much they are helping.