



Associate Professor Ayman Shenouda

Vice-President RACGP



RACGP 2020 Presidential Election Statement (advertisement)

Dear members,

For the past six years, in my role as RACGP Board Company Director and as Chair of the Rural Faculty, I have confidently made tough decisions for the benefit of the profession of general practice. I continue to express my dedication and support for GPs in my current position as Vice President of the RACGP.

Through having held various leadership positions within the college over the past 15 years, I have proudly created opportunities to represent and communicate with state and federal governments, and to advocate on behalf of the profession. Those roles saw me focus on rural general practice, my passion, however, is for general practice as a whole – unified, strengthened, and in charge of its own destiny.

My advocacy efforts have resulted in improved funding arrangements and new initiatives that have supported general practice. An example of this work is the recent Collingrove Agreement between RACGP and ACRRM, this is a testament to my ability to collaborate with other organisations for the enhancement of general practice.

Various roles with the RACGP called for extensive travel across rural Australia, from Longreach in QLD, Alice Spring in NT, to Ravensthorpe in WA, as well as visits to every capital city and state faculty office. I have met, and spoken with, GPs at the grassroots level to make sure my advocacy efforts are a true reflection of the hard-working needs and desires of GPs across Australia.

During the 20 years I worked in rural NSW I established my own private practice in Wagga Wagga. The practice was awarded RACGP General Practice of the year NSW/ACT 2007, followed by three AGPAL awards including safety and quality practice of the year in 2010.

I am an advocate for lifelong learning through training and education, both of which have always been my passion. I was on the RACGP expert committee of education for many years and also held the position of Director of Training in my region. The new College-led training model is inspiring and offers a brilliant opportunity to improve general practice training for the future. I hope we can all work together to make GP training something we can be proud of.

In my roles with the RACGP, I've developed the skills to communicate effectively with governments and the media. I have represented the views of the RACGP and my colleagues in various media outlets over the years, and welcome opportunities to continue doing so.

When GPs work together, change happens. As President, I want to bring members into the College, I want a new direct relationship with you. I want to harness the relationship you have with your patients to help advocate to government on your behalf and to make the necessary changes to ensure general practice becomes the best, and most prized job in medicine.

I have the knowledge, skills and expertise to lead the RACGP. I have done the hard yards. I understand every level of the College from expert committees, to examinations, to censors, to policy development. I believe I am the best person to represent the RACGP as President. I hope I will have your support in the upcoming election. To know more go to my website [GP ON A JOURNEY](#)

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My priorities for general practice

Priority 1: Robust training that attracts registrars, rewards supervisors, and addresses the complexity and scope of general practice.

Priority 2: General practice, seen as a well-respected and valued specialty.

Priority 3: A serious commitment from governments to invest in general practice.

Priority 4: Respect and protect all vulnerable populations and work towards Closing the Gap.

Priority 1: Robust training that attracts registrars, rewards supervisors, and addresses the complexity and scope of general practice.

We have worked hard to bring GP training back to the RACGP. Now it is time for training to be flexible, robust, contemporary and adaptable. Our pre-vocational training reforms must prioritise:

Attracting registrars

Working together we should seek to:

- Adequately remunerate doctors in training
- Develop a model that improves the terms and conditions for the employment of GP registrars and supports those transitioning from hospitals to general practice
- Create an educational experience that is robust, flexible, supportive and addresses the complexity and scope of general practice.

Rewarding supervisors

Training our future generation is the foundation of a healthy profession. Registrars learn from quality supervision. We need to grant supervisors the time and expertise to train the next generation of GPs.

Working together we should seek to invest in:

- A funding model that adequately remunerates GP supervisors for the time they spend, balancing quality supervision, patient care and business excellence
- Training incentive payments that acknowledge the cost of supervision and education, promotes quality supervision, and allows supervisors to maintain a suitable learning environment
- High quality, contemporary professional development for GP supervisors.

Priority 2: General practice, seen as a well-respected and valued speciality.

I love being a GP; it is a prestigious profession. As GPs we make ourselves accessible to our communities in times, they need it most. Our community of GPs is vibrant and diverse, we are passionate about our work and are resolved to improve the health of our patients and their families. We need to regain respect as a specialised medical profession, and for the valuable work we do.

The response to the 2019-2020 summer bushfires and COVID-19 demonstrated GPs' leadership, skill and compassion. We need to leverage the community support developed from this to improve the recognition of our role across government, health departments and the Australian community.

Working together we should seek to:

- Continue to promote and celebrate the role of GPs as highly trained medical specialists that offer solutions to address future complex health issues
- Position ourselves to advance primary care reform and to orchestrate a collaborative culture
- Utilise the media in all its forms, and in particular social media, to deliver a clear message and vision for the future of health in our communities.

Priority 3: A serious commitment from governments to invest in general practice.

General practice is the foundation of Australia's healthcare system. Our profession is vital to the health of our nation, yet we are underpaid, under prioritised and overstretched by rising demand. This is despite being Australia's most accessed healthcare service, with more than two million appointments made every week and with invaluable therapeutic doctor-patient relationships.

There is an urgent need for financial incentives, to reward GPs for increased scope, complexity, special interest, continuity of care, and patient coordination. We cannot ask GPs to perform an advanced-level job, but remunerate them with the lowest rates of all medical specialties. This has to change.

GPs seeing 50 patients a day is not sustainable. GPs do far more than episodic care; we coordinate chronic disease management, mental health, aged care and more, and we do it with integrity and excellence.

GPs have proven time and again that investing in general practice is the smart approach. Reducing financial waste in the healthcare system is a priority. We see too much doubling up on investigations, and between primary and tertiary care, eliminating this will free up finances to be redistributed to other priority areas.

Financial support from government is needed to address population challenges that are linked to chronic disease, palliative care, aged care, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse disorders. Telehealth and accessible patient health records are a start but we need more reforms. Primary Health Networks should have ability to directly commission general practice for programs such as mental health, care coordination and falls prevention.

Working together we should seek to secure:

- Improvements in the MBS so it rewards time spent with patients and addresses complexity of care
- Telehealth reform that complements quality patient care and supports continuity of care with the patient's own GP
- Funding for models of care that reward practices that provide patient access, management of complex care, quality care and outcomes
- Funding for new financial incentives that recognise the role of GPs in leading systematic approaches to chronic disease management. New incentives should support all members of a practice team to work to their full scope of practice
- Reviews of the Practice Incentive Payment scheme to better align it with contemporary general practice

Priority 4: Respect and protect all vulnerable populations and work towards Closing the Gap.

As a nation, we cannot continue to be healthy and prosperous unless the most vulnerable in our communities are safe, able to thrive and can access vital health care, education and services. Addressing the social determinants of health must continue to be our focus.

As GPs we must ensure our advocacy efforts recognise the challenges faced by people living with mental health issues, people experiencing abuse and domestic violence and those with economic barriers that prevent them from leading fulfilling lives.

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bring to our society a great respect for land, community and their Elders. There is much we can continue to learn from this enduring and rich culture. As GPs we should continue to take advice from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and their communities. We must strive to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to feel safe to access our services and enable them to receive the health care they deserve.

GPs in rural and remote Australia make an enormous contribution to the health care needs of communities. Living in rural and remote Australia has many benefits and for many people they would not live anywhere else. As GPs, we need to continue to work together to give people living in rural and remote Australia, access to high quality primary care. We must advocate for models of health care that are GP-led and address the complex health issues faced by people living in these settings.

Working together we should seek to secure:

- Improved funding models that recognise the central role of general practice in caring for vulnerable population
- MBS items that better rewards complexity, coordination, and continuity.

My contribution to the RACGP

General practice gives you the opportunity to make a contribution to your country. You can make a difference to the health of your community. It is the best medical speciality there is. In the past few years I have worked hard with my colleagues to make improvements to our profession.

Leadership roles at RACGP

- 20 years advocating for quality general practice education
- 12 years representing the profession to state and federal governments (rural issues)
- 6 years contributing to RACGP governance
- 2 terms as RACGP Vice President
- 6 years as Chair RACGP Rural
- 6 years as Deputy Chair RACGP Rural
- 20 years engagement on RACGP NSW ACT Council.

Key achievements

- Contributing to RACGP responses to natural disasters and COVID-19, as Vice President
- Representing the College to stakeholders and advocating for the profession
- Fostering new partnerships with ACRRM
- Establishing a new Rural Generalist Fellowship
- Collaborating with Rural Health Commissioner to benefit general practice
- Leading efforts to support general practitioners across Australia
- Securing new funding for training and support for general practice
- Facilitating strategic and long-term engagement with politicians
- Championing the establishment of a training program for International Medical Graduates
- Fostering relationships with stakeholders that benefit general practice
- Mentoring students, registrars, new fellows and international medical graduates
- Collaborating with speciality medical colleges to advance rural training and support rural general practice
- RACGP GP of the year in 2009
- Principle of Glenrock Country Practice - Awarded RACGP General Practice of the year NSW/ACT 2007, followed by three AGPAL awards including safety and quality practice of the year in 2010.

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I hope I will have your support in the upcoming RACGP President Election.

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