

## Ayman Shenouda Candidate Statement

General Practice has faced many challenges over recent years –Medicare rebate freeze, new PHNs structure and recent changes in training delivery. All of these are impacting on the future of our profession. I believe I have the experience and the vision to lead the RACGP, working alongside Council to **Add Value to General Practice**.

Standing for election, as the president of the RACGP is a long way from the corridors of a Cairo hospital where I first practiced medicine. Although enjoying my work as a surgeon early in my career I always felt there was something missing. The day I changed direction to work in general practice was life changing. I feel privileged to be a GP and I think it is the most rewarding job ever.

As an IMG I have had some difficult experiences but also had some wonderful ones, one of which was being awarded 2009 RACGP GP of the year. I am indebted to my colleagues and RACGP leaders who have supported and mentored me in my journey. My involvement with the Division of General Practice, the National Primary Care Collaborative, RACGP National Standard Committee of Education and as a director of training in the Riverina Murrumbidgee area have given me many opportunities to engage with GPs, supervisors, and registrars. I believe I share and understand the many complexities and challenges we face on a daily basis.

As the current chair of RACGP Rural Faculty I bring a strong rural voice and can contribute to reform, which will bring about significant and lasting policy change for rural communities.

My passion is to develop quality frameworks and systematic management tools to enable and enhance the work of GPs. I believe the RACGP has a key role to **support General Practice as a small business**.

Leading the RACGP is a great privilege and an opportunity to make a difference. I believe the College can be a key driver in adding value to General Practice through implementing change in six key areas, or pillars.

These pillars are:

1. Supporting quality care in general practice by assisting GPs to *implement good business models*
2. Providing a voice to members concerns through *strong advocacy* where the College leads in a proactive manner
3. *Engaging members* through strong communication channels
4. Building *strong leadership* to harness individual and collective talents
5. Supporting general practice *research* as the cornerstone of our future
6. Assisting and developing *training and education*

### **1. Supporting business in general practice:**

As general practice expands to meet the new environment and future challenges it is imperative to have a systemic approach backed by a solid business model that underpins **quality care**. There is a need to support the creation of new models of care delivery as many of our members are either seeking the opportunity to open new practices or refine existing practices. I believe that the RACGP can play an important role in supporting its members to make general practice viable as a small business regardless of whether you work in, or own it. This can be better achieved through the development of new resources and sharing and implementing new ideas:

- **A suite of business training opportunities** tailored to the needs of different members of the general practice team: the GPs, practice managers, nurses and other practice staff. Training modules can be developed to allow for individuals to choose topics according to individual practice needs and their stage in professional life.
- **Supporting members in their financial planning** decisions by assisting practices to develop financial models ranging from starting a new practice to long term planning and exit strategies. Similarly, financial **bench marking** can be achieved more effectively if the College acts a central point for data collection, provides feedback to individual practices on their performance and offer strategies for improvement.
- The College is a large entity with over 30,000 members and the power of this membership can be harnessed to negotiate **bulk purchasing** arrangements to offer practical financial benefits for members, for instance, insurance or agreements with medical supply companies for group discounts.
- **Support systems within the practise** using clinical audit to identify specific disease patterns and better utilize members of the healthcare team by assigning specific roles. This can under pin team work and ultimately provides better patient follow up and enhances the management of patients with chronic disease.
- Training staff members in **human resources** management in order to relieve the stresses of hiring and firing of staff, conduct performance management appraisals, design recruitment applications and prepare job descriptions. Templates for these tasks should be made available for individual practices to adopt and modify according to their needs.
- In addition, **support for legal matters** such as implementing practice structure models, employment contracts and alignment with medical insurance services are all issues in which the college should be offering support to members.

## **2. Advocacy**

The strength of the Australian health system lies in its reliance on general practice and the pivotal role of the general practitioner. I believe that it is essential that the solution for current and future challenges needs to come from within the profession by utilising the wealth of knowledge and expertise that exists within the College and its membership. This can position the RACGP as a leading voice in writing health policies and creating solutions alongside government.

The advocacy role can be enhanced by:

- Continuing to actively promote and celebrate the role of GPs as highly trained medical specialists that offer solutions to address future complex health issues.
- Being firm in our position against the **Medicare Rebate Freeze** and continue lobbying government and advocating for change to the funding models to close the gap between specialist and GP rebates.
- Working collaboratively with key health organisations in particular, PHNs, to achieve a well-aligned patient centred primary health care system with clear roles and responsibilities and be accountable for the future of a sustainable health system.
- Promoting and supporting research in general practice that can influence future decisions especially in public health and chronic disease management.
- Utilizing the media in all its forms and in particular social media to deliver a clear message and vision for future of health in our communities.

## **3. Enhancing members contribution to governance**

The strength of the College can only be realised by strong representation and participation of the members. We need to create communication channels, which allow members to input ideas and concerns on key issues and provide a forum for expression of new ideas. Similarly, communication between the faculties and council needs to be enhanced. The College is privileged to have developed 9 faculties, each of which contributes important information and feedback on specialised aspects of general practice. Links between the colleges and sharing of information and practices can only serve to strengthen the workings of the College.

## **4. Harnessing individuals' talents and provide leadership and future planning.**

To cope with the increasing complexity of issues and constantly changing primary care environment there is an urgent need to build leadership, which harnesses the individual and collective talents of primary health, teams. This requires proper engagement with college members by recognising potential leaders and fostering their talents through **specified training pathways and mentorship.**

## **5. *Supporting research in General Practice***

Research is the cornerstone of an academic college and the key to shaping our future practice. The general practitioner is in an ideal position to engage in research in primary care and help in the translation of new ideas and evaluation of interventions to the general public. There is a wealth of knowledge and research experience amongst our professorial members and Deans of General Practice, which can be utilised by the College. Our General Practices are a rich source for data collection, audit and real world experiences, which we need to encourage our College members as scientists to explore record and publish.

## **6. *Training and education***

Imparting the art of general practice is part of our responsibility in passing the baton to the next generation and instilling in future doctors a passion for the profession of general practice. Promoting career pathways in general practice in both rural and metropolitan settings is a key role for the College. We need to support training, education and innovative thinking through a wide variety of programs to enhance skill development at all stages of training.

- Mentorship of new fellows
- Support for practicing GPs in post fellowship education and advanced skills development
- Support for future GPs starting by hosting students, residents and registrars
- Support for integrated vertical and horizontal training
- Collaboration with RTOs
- Support for supervisors and training practices
- Support for medical educators and greater utilisation of their knowledge and teaching skill

These are some of what I consider to be the key issues that the RACGP needs to engage with and I believe I have the experience in my past and present roles and the vision to lead the RACGP in the future to work alongside Council to add value to general practice.