



ANZCA

FPM

President and CEO

Australian and New Zealand  
College of Anaesthetists

18 June 2025

The Hon. (Chris) Christopher John Minns,  
MP  
NSW Premier  
[office@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@premier.nsw.gov.au)  
[admin@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@premier.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Ryan John Park MP  
NSW Minister for Health  
MOH-  
[Minister@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Minister@health.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Minister Minns and Minister Park

**ANZCA Trainees perspective and concerns as part of recent NSW industrial action**

We write to you following the recent April 2025 NSW medical workforce industrial action, where over 5000 NSW doctors went on strike for 72 hours at 32 sites, and the subsequent concerning advice from our anaesthesia trainees. Our ANZCA NSW Trainee Committee has written to us outlining their concerns regarding trainee welfare arising from issues during the recent industrial action (a copy of the letter is provided).

Key roles of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) are setting and maintaining standards of clinical practice, safety, training and high-quality patient care. Our role doesn't normally relate to employment, award or employer workforce matters, however there is an intersect where these workforce issues may, and often do, impact and undermine the safe and quality of care provided to patients and workforce wellbeing. These aspects are very much within our remit and role.

We are very concerned with the advice provided by our NSW trainees that they were subjected to threats of disciplinary action, de-registration and reporting to regulatory bodies for participating in the industrial action. This has the potential for mental health impacts, resulting in anxiety and distress. We are also aware some of these threats were made to trainees not participating in the industrial action. Whether this was filtered down by the health ministry or actions taken by NSW health services executive, we are disappointed that our trainees (and in fact our fellows as well) received this treatment.

The strikes were the result of inaction to address unsafe working conditions, unsafe hours, chronic understaffing and pay parity, which our trainees felt needed to be escalated to ensure improved future employment conditions in NSW. Our concerns have been independently confirmed by the *Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding* (Inquiry) that states there are "high levels of fatigue, stress and "burnout" across the NSW Health workforce". In August 2024 and March 2025, we wrote to you and your department indicating our growing workforce concerns in NSW. These issues remain prevalent, more so when compared to other Australian jurisdictions.

The inquiry's report also states that "collaboration with the specialist medical colleges" will be required (regarding training networks). As such, we would welcome working with you and your department to

communicate and manage relevant future messaging to our trainees and fellows and of course identifying and implementing solutions to the broader workforce issues.  
We are happy to meet with you to discuss any aspect of these issues and any effective solutions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Story'.

Professor David Story  
President, ANZCA  
[president@anzca.edu.au](mailto:president@anzca.edu.au)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N Fidgeon'.

Nigel Fidgeon  
CEO, ANZCA  
[ceo@anzca.edu.au](mailto:ceo@anzca.edu.au)



**ANZCA**  
FPM

Friday 23 May 2025

Prof David Story  
President, ANZCA  
[president@anzca.edu.au](mailto:president@anzca.edu.au)

Mr Nigel Fidgeon  
CEO, ANZCA  
[ceo@anzca.edu.au](mailto:ceo@anzca.edu.au)

Dear Dave and Nigel,

### **Trainee perspective and concerns as part of recent NSW industrial action**

As co-chairs of the ANZCA NSW Trainee Committee, we would like to provide our trainees' perspective on the conduct and actions as part of the recent NSW medical workforce industrial action.

As you are aware, in early April 2025 over 5,000 NSW doctors went on strike for 72 hours at 32 sites. The strikes were a result of the lack of meaningful negotiations and solutions on working conditions, unsafe hours, chronic understaffing, permanency, pay parity, overtime and importantly the impact of these conditions on patient safety. Many of these doctors that went on strike were junior doctors fearful of the future of their employment conditions in NSW with many ANZCA trainees participating.

A key role of the Trainee Committee is to advocate for our trainees and their needs, which in this instance relates to ensuring their wellbeing and safety in their workplace. We understand that ANZCA does not have a direct remit regarding employment, award or employer workforce matters, rather focusing on its role in setting and fostering standards of clinical practice, safety, training and high-quality patient care. We also appreciate the college's efforts to date in ensuring support for NSW anaesthetists to ensure patient and anaesthetist safety and wellbeing – including writing to the NSW Ministers and departmental leaders, involvement in government discussions and meetings, and contributing to public awareness in the media.

As part of ANZCA's remit in ensuring that workforce problems are not undermining quality of care and workforce wellbeing (including potential mental health impacts/distress caused to trainees by some of these actions) we would like to highlight some of the issues our trainees faced as part of these industrial actions. This is provided in the hope that you can continue to advocate for change and opposing any inappropriate practices continuing to occur in the NSW public sector health environment (especially relating to our trainees - the future workforce).

These issues have included:

- Threats of disciplinary action and de-registration of AHPRA registration and therefore losing the right to practise medicine for those involved in industrial action
- Threats of trainees being reporting to NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) for those participating in industrial action
- Threats of being financially liable for any adverse patient events during the strike days (i.e. not being able to access the NSW treasury managed fund for issues occurring during those strike days)

These threats were passed onto all trainees (as part of wider distribution to all NSW public sector medical staff) by some hospital/health service directors of medical services, regardless of whether they had registered an intention to strike with ASMOF. These emails appeared to be originally written as a template by NSW Health. As the emails were sent to both junior and senior doctors in several LHDs so we anticipate fellows of the college may have been recipients.

As you can imagine, we as the trainee committee have been contacted by numerous trainees experiencing significant anxiety and stress. The threat of potentially losing their right to practice medicine or face significant financial liability for adverse patient events (for hypothetical patients not directly under their care) has been particularly distressing to trainees.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the general impacts in terms of quality of training for our NSW ANZCA trainees if the current situation in NSW continues. Staff Specialist Anaesthetists have a vital and often underappreciated role in departments with regards to provision of high-quality trainee supervision, development of educational and research opportunities for trainees as well as other non-clinical work. With the current award, we are aware that we are losing staff specialists from NSW Health and will continue to do so, with a majority of NSW trainees opting for VMO contracts when they complete their training if they choose to remain in NSW Health. As trainees we are also concerned about the loss of FANZCAs from the public sector in NSW and the longer-term implication on the quality of our training and safe supervision levels.

We are happy to discuss if you require any further information to help ensure the issues impacting our critical cohort is understood.

We have escalated our concerns for support through the ANZCA Trainee Committee and its co-chairs prior to sending you this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sukhi Hegde  
Co-chair, ANZCA Trainee Committee and  
NSW ANZCA Trainee Committee



Dr. Bahaven Jeyaratnam  
Co-chair, NSW ANZCA Trainee Committee