



**ANZCA**  
FPM

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Dear Dr Mark, Mr Moffet and Dr Anwar

### **Anaesthesia trainee registrar at Albany Health Campus**

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) has been working with our WA fellows and WA regional committee to identify and understand the full extent of anaesthesia training and workforce gaps, issues and opportunities. We would like to draw your attention to one of the key issues relating to Albany Health Campus (AHC). This has been previously raised with your respective offices in the past.

#### **Anaesthesia workforce in WA**

ANZCA is one of the largest medical colleges in Australia and New Zealand, responsible for the postgraduate training programs of more than 10,000 active specialist anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians, trainees and specialist international medical graduates (SIMGs).

The college plays a critical role in ensuring Australia is one of the safest places in the world to have an operation under anaesthesia. This is due to ANZCA's robust training program, rigorous standards of clinical practice and patient safety, and the significant voluntary education, mentoring, and supervision of junior doctors by specialist anaesthetists.

Across WA, there are over 120 active ANZCA anaesthesia trainees in 14 training settings (including satellite sites). WA also has over 670 active ANZCA fellows and 32 specialists currently approved to undertake the ANZCA Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG) pathway.

#### **Anaesthesia training at AHC**

As you are aware, AHC is classified as MM3 - Large rural town under the Modified Monash Model. It is an accredited satellite site under the Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospitals Group for the purposes of accredited anaesthesia training.

The Western Australian Rotational Anaesthetic Training Program (WARATP) is run on behalf of all WA anaesthesia training hospitals to administer the selection and placements of trainees to enable completion of ANZCA training requirements in the core and specialised study units. WARATP currently includes training in the following hospitals: Armadale Hospital, Bunbury Regional Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Fremantle Hospital, Joondalup Health Campus, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Midland Health Campus, Osborne Park Hospital, Perth Children's Hospital, Rockingham General Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.

Rotations through a selection of these hospitals allows the trainee to gain a wide range of experience in different hospital settings. Many trainees will have at least one term at outer metropolitan hospitals or Bunbury Hospital.

The AHC Anaesthetic Department is currently staffed by three (2.6 FTE) consultant anaesthetists and 10 part-time Rural Generalist Anaesthetists. There is continuous consultant support (1 in 3), with the RGAs covering on average one list per week and on call duty.

Based on the most recent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data<sup>1</sup>, AHC has seen a 6.7 per cent annual increase in the total number of admissions to hospital in 2023-24 and 4.0 per cent increase in 2022-23. This together with the 1.4 per cent population growth Albany experienced in June 2025, and 1.6 per cent in the prior year<sup>2</sup>, indicates the area is experiencing continued population growth, and in turn, demand for hospital services. As a consequence, the service is facing an increased and prolonged waitlist timeframe. The acuity and complexity of theatre cases also continues to grow.

Unfortunately, to date this growth has revealed some gaps which were objectively accumulated during the preceding years. In addition to being stagnant in size compared with other departments, the lack of contribution to anaesthesia training and academia is another weakness that has been identified.

**We believe it is now critical for AHC to have a dedicated anaesthetic trainee registrar position, that is part of the WARATP.** As a teaching hospital, AHC is an integral part of the WA educational system for all incorporated specialties, as the major resource centre for the Great Southern region. It should also be noted that AHC has been through ANZCA accreditation almost two years ago and is readily available to accept trainees.

Having a registrar position in place in AHC would:

- Enhance the region's teaching culture and directly improve regional healthcare access.
- Directly expose junior doctors to the broad scope of rural and remote medicine and increase the likelihood that these doctors will return to regional and rural WA to practice in the future. This would help to combat the medical workforce shortages experienced in rural and regional areas across the country. This is a priority for ANZCA, aligns to WA Health's 2034 10-year workforce strategy to build sustainable local capacity, and instigates the Australian Government's *National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021-2031*.
- Not only would the implementation of this position benefit the individual registrar, but it would also have positive benefits for the senior anaesthetists who supervise and train them. Trainee registrars progressing through their exams demand that the academic knowledge base of their trainers remains up to date, maintaining the academic rigor and relevance of the department and the ANZCA curriculum.
- Satisfy the case load needs experienced and anticipated at AHC and the overarching WARATP rotational training needs, especially being only one of two regional training sites in WA.
- Bring cost savings, through reduction in the consultant (second on call) callbacks, both during weekdays and weekends. This would not only be financially beneficial but would also significantly contribute to fatigue reduction and ensuring patient safety, as anaesthetists perform a notable amount of on call, recall and overtime.

Key stakeholders may consider that it may be beneficial for this position to share a six-month rotation with Bunbury Hospital, as part of the WARATP.

### **Accessing potential Commonwealth funding**

AHC is currently on the reserve list of the Australian Government Specialist Training Program (STP) which is a backup or waitlist of posts identified as suitable for funded training positions, however, were not initially allocated a place. If funding becomes available through reallocation or additional Australian Government funding, these posts will usually be converted to an active STP-funded post in the first instance, especially those located in rural or regional settings and/or workforce shortage areas.

STP is valuable to states and territories because it aims to ease some of the financial burden of staffing by contributing funding (approximately \$110k salaries plus \$25k rural support loading per

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/hospitals/my-local-area-hospital/h0694>

<sup>2</sup> <https://profile.id.com.au/albany/population-estimate?BMID=20>

1.0 FTE) to accredited medical training outside traditional metropolitan teaching hospitals, to meet local healthcare demands.

In late 2025, ANZCA was invited to convert a small number of reserve list posts into active STP-funded posts if sites could confidently recruit registrars to positions. We were hopeful that one of those posts would be for AHC. However unfortunately, although the position could be filled, we were advised that due to WA Government FTE freezes, recruitment to this position was not allowed. This was disappointing advice.

This issue was previously flagged with the WA Health Chief Medical Officer in late 2025.


It should be noted that Bunbury Hospital was successful in securing one of these funded posts.

We are now seeking WA Government support to advance the implementation of an anaesthetic registrar at AHC, with dedicated WA Government funding/FTE and provide reassurance that similar roadblocks to Commonwealth funding will not occur if additional STP funded posts become available later in 2026 or during 2027. AHC is ready to recruit if and when this funding opportunity becomes available. Movement in this STP funding space can occur quickly, with hospital departments often expected to respond promptly, so we would like to be proactively ready with a positive response and recruitment if and when needed.

Alternatively, we believe this will become a cost necessity that the WA Government will need to bare themselves in the near future. Perhaps even to help deliver the state government's 2026-27 budget commitment to expand the AHC via a new 32-bed modular ward and the associated anticipated capacity increase.<sup>3</sup>

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further and work together to support a sustainable anaesthesia workforce and the continued high-quality care for the WA Great Southern region.

Regards,



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**ANZCA President**



Dr Zoran Stojkovski  
**Head of Anaesthetics, Albany  
Health Campus**



Dr Alan Ch'Ng  
**ANZCA WA Education Officer**

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<sup>3</sup> [Budget fully funds Albany Health Campus expansion | Western Australian Government](#)