

## MEDICUS MARCH

In times of natural disaster there are those who flee and those who stay. Some who stay may have had the privilege of foresight and planned for the 'rainy day'. Others who stay do it out of sheer stubbornness and the denial of any surrounding tribulation. The rapid increase of medical student numbers (with the inevitable shortage of training positions during and immediately after medical school) is currently referred to by many stakeholders with many 'disaster' synonyms; flood, tsunami and even avalanche! Fortunately for our little village (Australia) there are people busy strengthening the river walls, installing underwater seismic sensors and breeding and dispatching Saint-Bernard rescue teams.

I type my thoughts 10 kilometres up above the Nullarbor somewhere – returning from the latest council meeting of the Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA). 17 AMSA representatives with their respective medical society presidents (or proxy), and representatives from the two new schools (Deakin and Notre Dame Sydney) congregated on Southport Queensland to report on and discuss current pressing issues on the medico-political scene. Among the 300-page agenda documents you'll find the draft navigation charts to the treacherous waters of medical student issues.

The council is conducted with precision timing, high technology and clear standing orders. The net result is a national student representative body that deliberates on policy statements which are distilled from constructive consultation and lively debate. However the product is a united front which seeks to safeguard the interests of all medical students across Australia. For Notre Dame, two of the four cents come from the elected AMSA representative, Stuart Menogue. An asset to the student body, Stuart brings to the table a background in corporate psychology – evident in his acute understanding of the sensitive nature of the raft of issues discussed during the council weekend.

Previous sitting members of the AMSA council have gone on to become not only valuable members of the Australian health care community but also sitting members on State and Federal AMA's and Governments. Sitting amongst the potential, Dobbs, Capolinguas, McGintys, Nelsons and Rudds of the future gives a semblance of security that although times may be trying, no-one will be drowned swept away or covered in a pile of snow.

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MSAND President