



IMPACT REPORT 2025

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Doctors' Health NSW

Support. Connect. Respect.

Doctors' Health NSW acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to the elders past and present and we extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We have much to learn from our First Nations people, and recognise their deep and enduring connection to Country, culture and community. We are committed to continuing to honour this tradition of connection and care in the ongoing work of our organisation. Doctors' Health NSW celebrates diversity and strives to ensure that our organisation remains accessible, inclusive, and respectful to all.



About this report

The Doctors' Health NSW Impact Report 2025 includes financial and activity data for the period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025.

Doctors' Health NSW provides free, confidential and independent services for all medical practitioners, dentists, veterinarians and students of these professions, or any friends, colleagues or family members concerned about them.

The terms "doctor" and "student" are used in this report to encompass individuals from all these professional groups.

Financial information provided is from the annual Financial Statements to 30 June 2025, audited by LBW & Partners, Chartered Accountants, Level 3, 845 Pacific Highway, CHATSWOOD NSW 2067.

Doctors' Health NSW (previously Doctors' Health Advisory Service) is an Australian Charities and Not for-profits Commission (ACNC) registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the Australian Tax Office. Fully audited financial information is provided each year to the ACNC in an Annual Information Statement - further details can be found on their website www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities by searching **ABN 93488047426**.



Thank you for this wonderful service. 12 months ago a doctor from the Doctors' Health NSW service returned my request for a call. As a father, husband and GP I had hit an emotional wall mid-morning at work. Despite using as many self-help strategies as possible, work-stress and family life had become intolerable. Within an hour of her listening, supporting and gently challenging me she changed my perspectives on the issues at hand and gave me tools to move forward. For this I will be eternally grateful."

– GP, regional NSW

Who we are

Doctors' Health NSW is a fully independent, doctor-led registered charity. We provide confidential support and targeted education to doctors and medical students across New South Wales. We believe doctors' health is essential to delivering safe, high-quality patient care, and we advocate for healthier, more sustainable workplaces and training environments.

We are here for all 41,000+ medical practitioners in NSW, along with the thousands of students, dentists, and veterinarians working and studying in every region of our state.

Our vision

A profession in which doctors and medical students can thrive, supported by a culture that values and promotes wellbeing. Healthy doctors provide better care, have sustainable careers, and remain in the profession longer; strengthening the health of our communities.

Our purpose

To help doctors and medical students stay well by providing confidential support they can trust, and education and advocacy that can help them thrive.

Guiding principles

- Doctors' health underpins quality care; supporting doctors helps sustain safe, compassionate, and effective healthcare - for their patients, colleagues, and families.
- Confidentiality is critical; doctors need access to trusted, independent spaces where they can seek help safely and without fear of judgement.

What we do

- Care for doctors, medical students, dentists and veterinarians
- Offer confidential, peer-to-peer support from specially trained and experienced doctors
- Advocate for respectful, safe and sustainable working environments in healthcare
- Deliver evidence-based education to improve doctors' health and wellbeing
- Research and develop resources to support the health and wellbeing of doctors and medical students in their workplaces and places of study.

Why we are here – the pressures doctors face

Medicine is demanding work. Long hours, heavy responsibility, and constant pressure to perform take a toll on doctors' health and wellbeing. Many push through exhaustion or illness, fearing stigma or professional consequences if they seek help.

Doctors' Health NSW exists to provide a safe confidential space where doctors can talk to peers who understand the realities of the job - without fear of judgement.

Our experienced doctors help callers manage stress and feel genuinely heard and supported. Our 24/7 service is a reminder that it's always okay to call - day or night - and that no doctor ever needs to feel alone.

“Caring for patients should not cost doctors their own health.”

– GP, Central Coast, NSW



Chair and Medical Director's Report

Our Callers First

This year, hundreds of doctors and medical students trusted us with their stories. They called while under pressure, making tough decisions, or managing personal struggles. Being part of those moments is a privilege.

The impact of a conversation is not easy to measure. We will never ask callers to stay on the line for a survey. What we do hear is gratitude – in steadier voices, or maybe even a relieved laugh as a way forward becomes clearer, or in a call back months later to say things are improving. Our service is always about our callers. Protecting their trust is always our first priority.

Our achievements this year have included:

Our 24/7 Phonenumber

In FY25, 345 calls came from doctors and students dealing with burnout, bullying, stress, complaints, or the weight of expectation – as well as from friends, family, and colleagues worried about them. Each caller was connected with an experienced peer who listened without judgement.

Education & Connection

We connected with over 1,670 doctors and students through workshops and training.

Highlight: Our Leadership and Connection series with NSW Rural Doctors Network gave rural GPs space to reflect, reconnect and strengthen peer support.

Postvention Support

We developed When a Doctor Dies: Responding After an Unexpected Death or Suicide – a NSW Health-funded guide for hospitals with clear next steps. We also provided face to face support when needed.

Advocacy & Recognition

- Opposed age-based health checks that risk deterring doctors from seeking care
- Advocated for better junior doctor conditions
- Received an Excellent rating in the 2024 ACHS National Standards review, recognising our model as safe, compassionate and effective.

Looking Ahead

Our phonenumber service and education sessions are in high demand, but our resources are stretched and the future is uncertain. To keep this work going, we need help to ensure ongoing and secure funding – protecting this vital service for doctors and students into the future.

Your support will help keep this service available whenever it's needed.

Visit www.doctorshealth.org.au or call our office on 02 9030 7515.



Dr Ameeta Patel
Chair



Dr Kathryn Hutt
Medical Director

Setting the standard in doctors' health

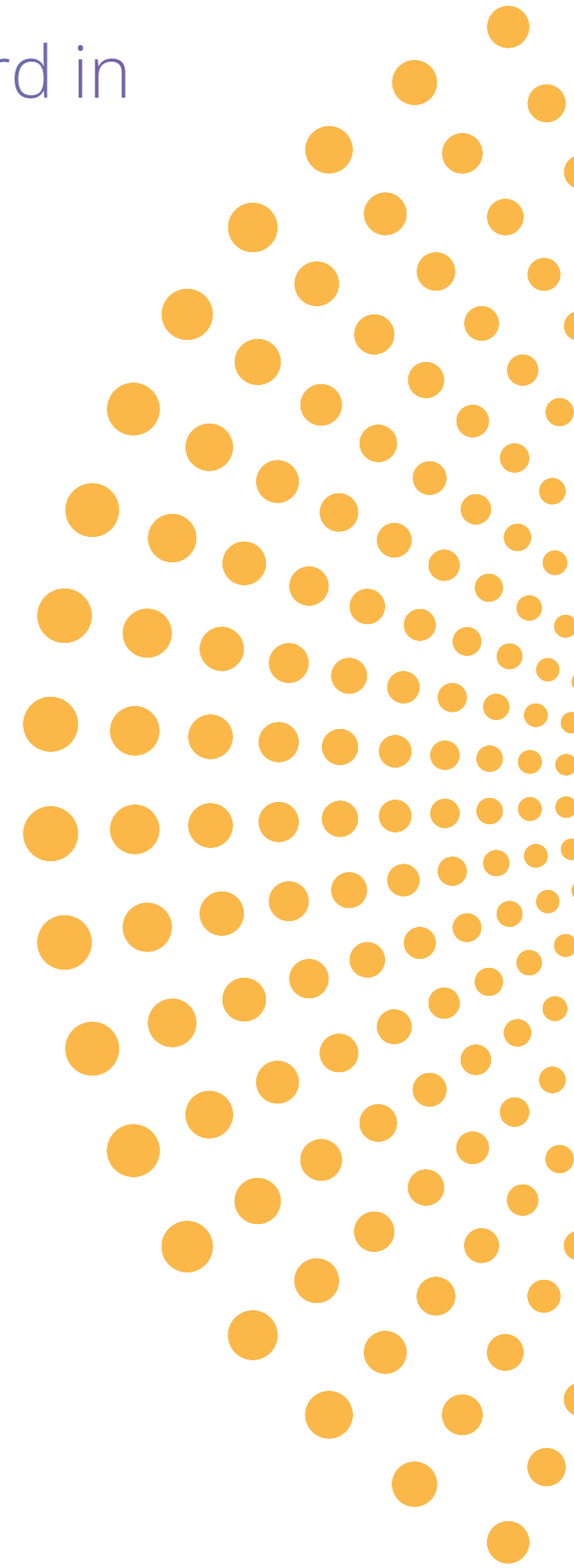
When doctors have a trusted source of support, they are more likely to seek help early - and stay well enough to care for others. Doctors' Health NSW delivers that support, built on confidentiality, independence, and expert peer-to-peer care.

Our team understands the realities of medicine because we have lived them. We provide practical, empathetic guidance and keep our skills sharp through training, peer review, debriefing, and our national Journal Club, where doctors across Australia share and discuss the latest research and articles on doctors' health and wellbeing.

In 2024, we were awarded an Excellent rating by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in an independent audit for the National Standards for Doctors' Health Services in Australia. This recognises our strong governance, commitment to improvement and the high quality of care we provide.

PP "I'm so glad I decided to call. I feel much better – you really understood."

– Intern, regional hospital



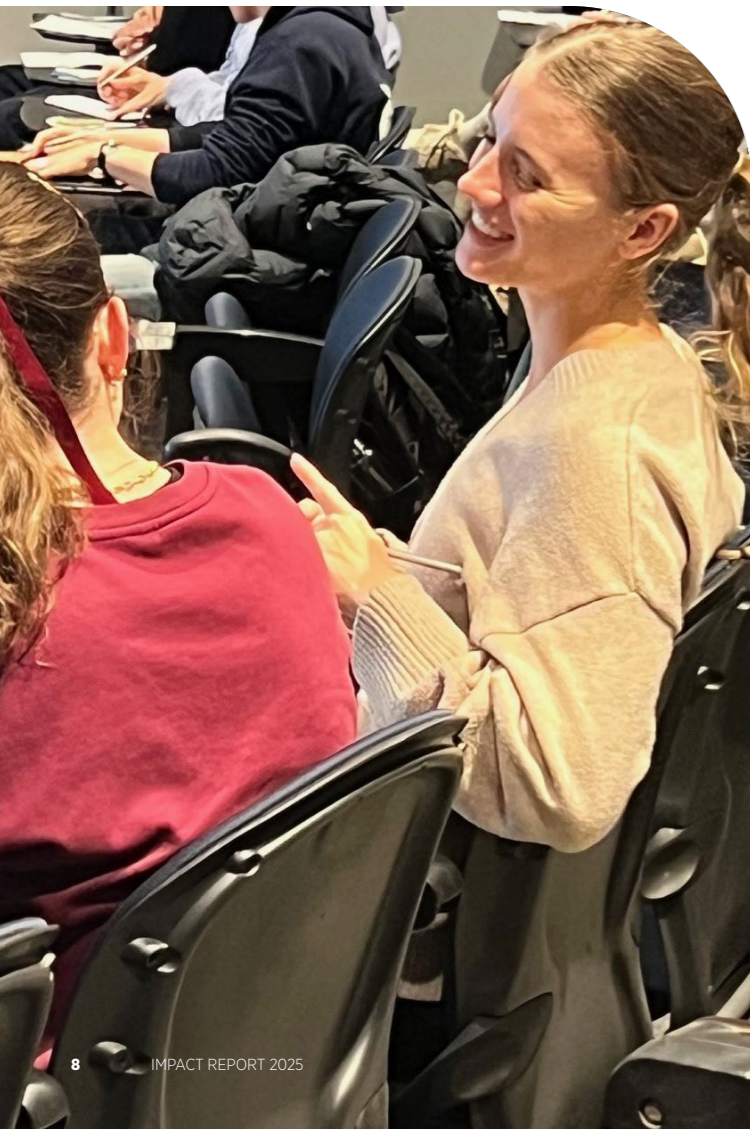
2024 - 2025 Reflections

Education, Research, Leadership, and Advocacy

Changing the narrative

This year, we connected with more than 1,670 doctors through workshops, talks, and webinars.

We're shifting the culture from competition to collaboration and peer support – making it normal to care for your own, and your colleagues', health and wellbeing.



Moments that mattered

- Being there 24/7 to support the hundreds of doctors and students who called us
- Welcoming new interns with practical tools for their first year
- Honest conversations with junior doctors about what to do when things go wrong
- Providing support for directors of training because leaders need care too
- Running GP sessions on professionalism, ethics, and self-care
- Webinars and podcasts with Black Dog Institute and NSW Health
- Encouraging medical students to care for themselves before caring for others
- Meeting peers at Deadly Doctors, NSW RDN, and rural GP events.



This workshop taught me that real connection can help us feel safe and supported.”

– Doctor in training, NSW hospital

Working side by side

With the NSW Rural Doctors Network, we piloted leadership and peer connection programs at Wagga Wagga and Tweed Valley Hospitals. Doctors at all levels learned how to better connect.

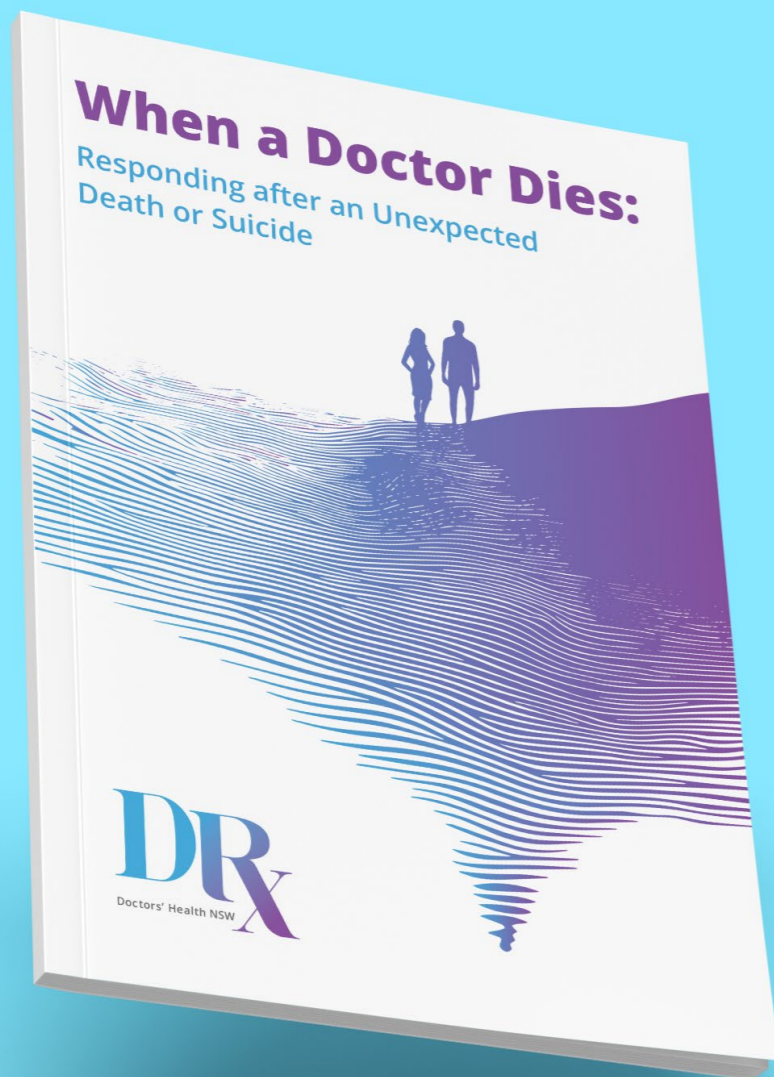


Advocating for our peers

We've spoken up where it matters:

- Bringing our voice and experience to key national and state conversations – where we've pushed for real action on doctors' health
- Calling for safer conditions and better health support for junior doctors
- Advocating for fair, individual assessment instead of mandatory age-based health checks for older practitioners
- Leading new research with doctors affected by the sudden death of a colleague and producing a practical guide for hospital teams; *When a Doctor Dies – Responding with Compassion and Care.*

When a doctor dies – responding with compassion and care



<https://doctorshealth.org.au/when-a-doctor-dies> 

“As doctors, we deal with death and grief as part of our job. We help others navigate through it, prepare them for it. But when it’s one of us, it hits differently. You’d think we’d be able to handle it, but it’s just not that simple. There’s something profound about losing a medical colleague; it shakes us to our core.”

Losing a colleague is one of the most painful moments in medicine. It is more than grief – it can shake a team’s confidence, sense of safety, and connection. In 2024, we wanted to understand that impact through the eyes of those who had lived it.

With funding from the NSW Ministry of Health and in partnership with the University of Notre Dame Australia, we led a new research study that focused on listening to doctors who had experienced the sudden death of a peer – whether by suicide, misadventure, or other causes. What they shared was honest, raw, and deeply human. They spoke about the moments that helped them feel supported and the times when silence or the organisation’s made the loss even harder.

Their voices shaped *When a Doctor Dies: Responding After an Unexpected Death or Suicide*, a practical guide for hospital leaders. It sets out clear, compassionate steps – from what to do in the first hours, to how to walk alongside colleagues in the weeks and months that follow.

Because how we respond matters. A rushed or impersonal approach can leave people feeling alone in their grief. A thoughtful, human response can steady them, protect their wellbeing, and show that their loss is shared.

We are deeply grateful to all doctors who entrusted us with their stories. Their courage will help ensure that, in the most difficult of times, no one in our profession is left to carry the weight alone.

We would also like to thank the AMA NSW doctors in training committee who initiated this project.

“I was shocked and deeply shaken. I found it difficult to function normally and often became emotional and teary when explaining to patients why I was stepping in for my colleague.”

“Working at the place where we worked together was tough. Having to conceal the grief in order to carry out work duties only added to the strain.”



Voices on the phonenumber – a conversation with one of our on-call doctors

Why did you decide to join the doctors' phonenumber?

Because I understand the pressure doctors are under - I've lived it. I've worked while juggling professional and family responsibilities, and the constant expectation to keep going. I have also felt lucky to have close colleagues to talk to during tough times, so I know how important it is to have someone to talk to who understands. Sometimes just being able to share makes a huge difference.

What do you wish more doctors knew about the service?

That you can call anytime. It's not only for people in crisis. Sometimes just talking to someone - early - helps you make sense of things and relieves the pressure before it gets worse.

What surprises you about taking calls?

How familiar it all feels. The details differ, but the feelings - exhaustion, pressure, self-doubt - are shared across all stages of a medical career. So many doctors think it's just them. It isn't.

What difference does it make that it's a doctor-to-doctor service?

It changes everything. As soon as someone realises they're talking to another doctor, they can relax. There's no need to explain the context - we get it. That shared experience builds trust quickly, and that's powerful.

Is it difficult work?

Not in the way people might think. It's meaningful. The hard part is knowing how many doctors are out there struggling in silence. But it's a privilege to be the person on the other end of the line when someone does pick up the phone and calls.

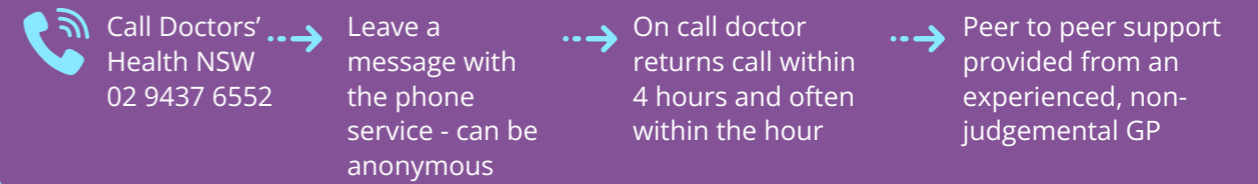
What keeps you doing it?

Sometimes it's just one call, but you can tell it mattered. It gave them space, perspective, maybe even a bit of relief. That's enough.

When I have a conversation with a caller and I can tell it mattered and made a difference, that's very meaningful.

What happens when you call the Doctors' Health NSW phonenumber?

24/7 CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT, 365 DAYS A YEAR



You can also call 1800 006 888 - the national doctors' health line - and be connected directly to the local doctors' health service wherever you are in Australia.

A turning point

Rachel* was a registrar on the edge of leaving her job. Late one night, feeling exhausted and teary, she called the Doctors' Health NSW phonenumber.

She spoke about the long shifts, exam stress, and a workplace where she felt unsupported. The pressure to hold it all together had become too much.

Our on-call doctor simply listened - without judgement - and reassured her that what she was feeling was normal and shared by many others. Together, they made a plan for support.

That night was a turning point. Rachel booked an appointment with her GP, connected with a psychologist, and spoke with a trusted supervisor at work.

Months later, Rachel called again - this time to let us know she was feeling much better.

**Name has been changed.*

PP I was ready to quit medicine. Talking to another doctor who understood made me realise I wasn't alone. It gave me permission to get help - and it changed everything."



Education and events - building skills, connection, and care

From first-year students to senior doctors, our education program helps doctors learn the importance of caring for themselves and for each other.

In 2024–25, we ran over 30 workshops, talks, and webinars across NSW. These are grounded in research and frameworks like self-determination theory, which shows we can thrive when we feel safe, connected and aligned with our values.

Whether with first-year students, junior doctors, or senior clinicians, our sessions spark honest, practical conversations and the opportunity to practise skills and strategies that strengthen peer support, resilience and foster a culture of collaboration within medicine.



An RACGP workshop for registrars with the Doctors' Health NSW team

PP We laughed so much – it was a really fun way to learn about supporting each other.”

– Year 2 medical student

PP This was a chance to slow down and really reflect – I've learned skills I'll take with me for life.”

– Year 4 medical student

PP It felt good to have a genuine conversation and really connect with my peers. This was a different kind of workshop - we need more like this.”

– Doctor in training



PP This workshop grounded me during a really stressful period – it was the check-in I needed.”

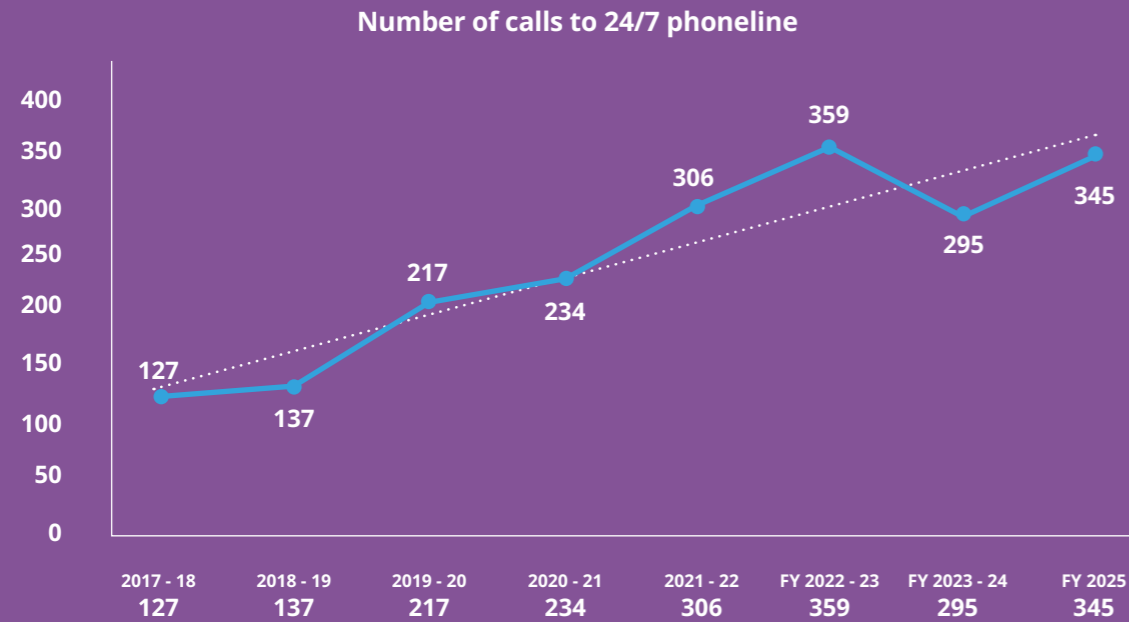
– Year 3 medical student



What we know about our callers

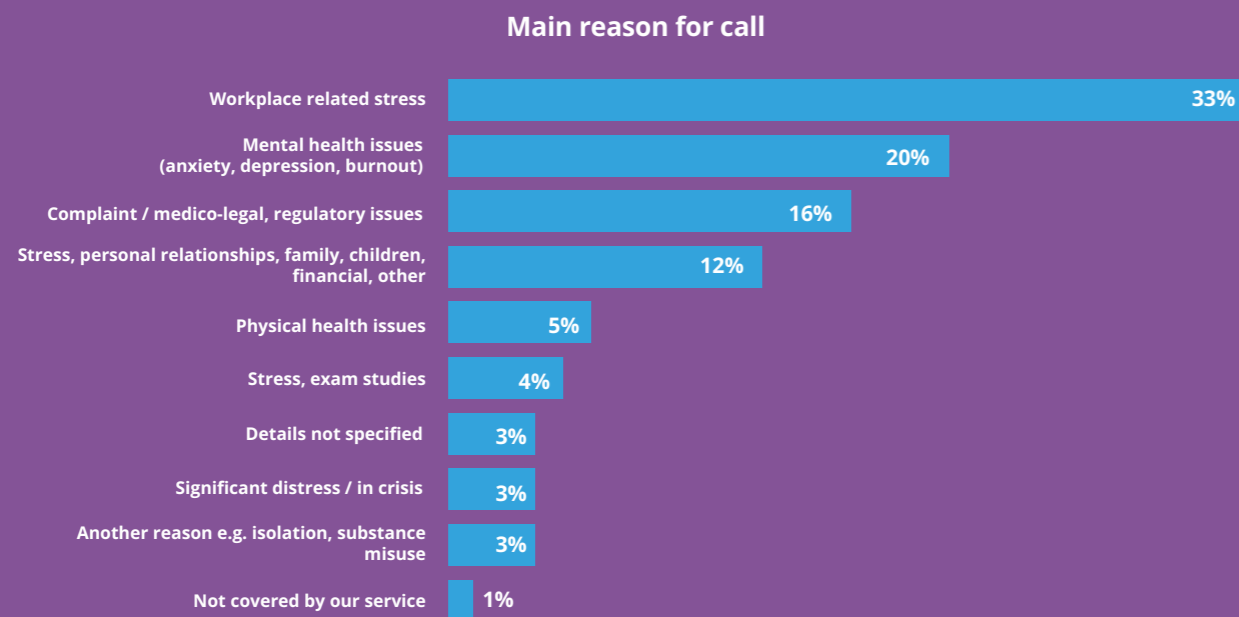
Sustained demand – our phonenumber is a lifeline

This year, 345 doctors and medical students reached out to us for support.



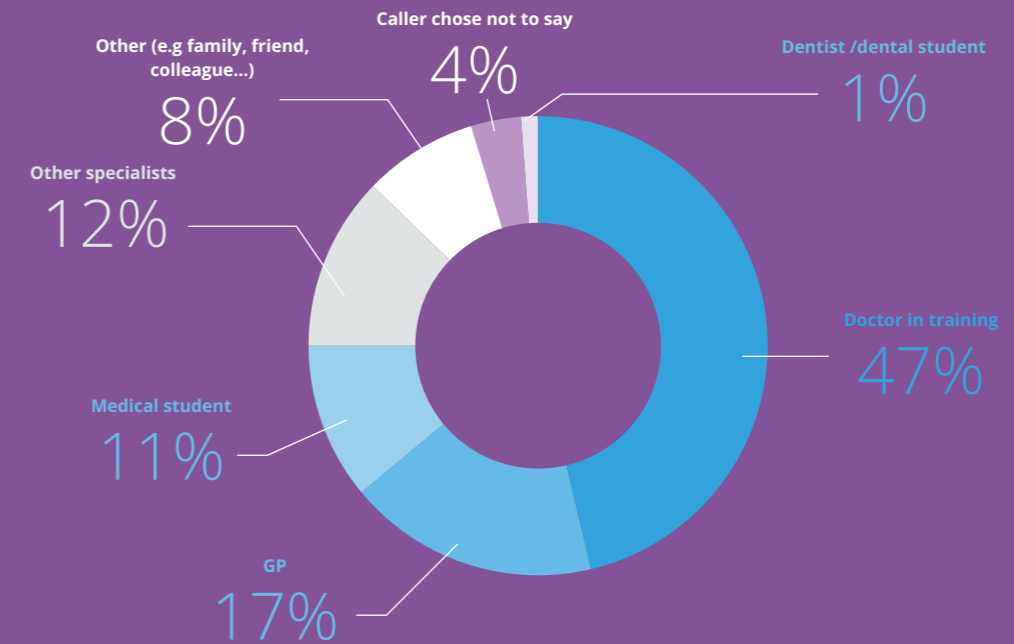
Let's talk about work

Workplace pressures continue to be the main reason doctors call us. Many callers also face a mix of professional and personal challenges, and value a doctor-led service that understands and can talk through the realities of the profession.



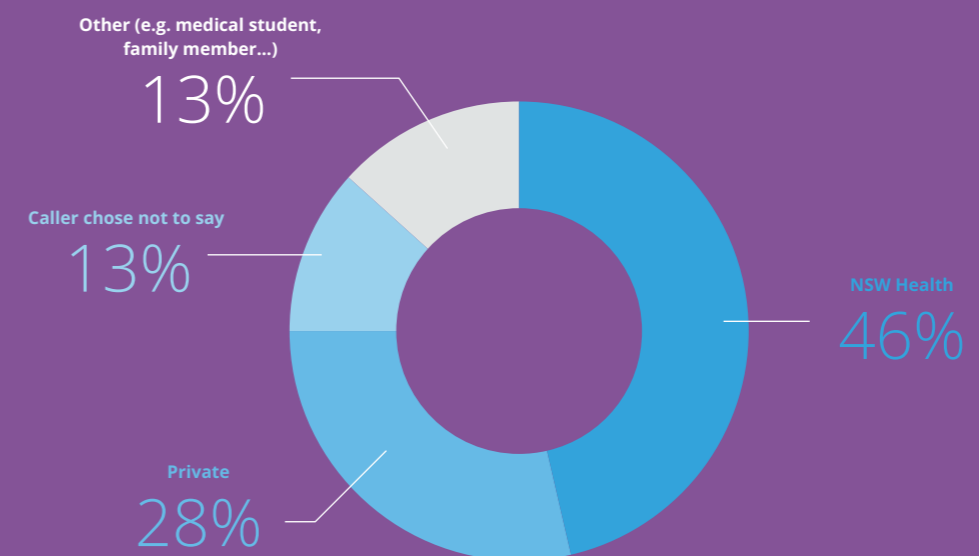
Our callers – from students to specialists

Doctors at every stage of their career turn to us — from students and trainees to GPs and other senior specialists - knowing they will be heard, understood, and supported.



Where our callers work

We are here for every doctor and medical student in New South Wales. Many of our callers are part of NSW Health, showing the trust placed in us by the state's hospital doctors.



Financial Snapshot

Doctors' Health Advisory Service NSW Ltd
For the year ended 30 June 2025

Statement of Income and Expenditure

Income	2025	2024	2023	2022
Revenue	503,079	562,625	450,886	459,188
Interest Received	20,230	7,673	3,637	278
Total Income	523,309	570,298	454,523	459,466
Expenditure				
Doctors' Health Training, Education and Research	(42,414)	(34,742)	(19,366)	(16,242)
Employee benefits expense - Doctors' Health Training, Education and Research	(143,788)	(144,727)	(131,956)	(119,641)
24/7 Doctors' Health Telephone Service	(70,972)	(71,124)	(72,721)	(77,336)
Employee benefits expense - 24/7 Doctors' Health Telephone Service	(77,486)	(72,712)	(83,380)	(73,883)
Finance expense	(3,588)	(5,687)	(6,369)	(2,710)
Occupancy expenses	(10,282)	(8,853)	(18,619)	(9,972)
Administration expense	(46,857)	(50,990)	(40,731)	(52,546)
Employee benefits expense - Administration	(95,983)	(76,538)	(73,670)	(77,922)
Employee benefits expense - Postvention Project	(15,126)	(65,362)	(3,208)	-
Depreciation expense	(26,014)	(31,447)	(27,802)	(27,272)
Total Expenditure	(532,510)	(562,182)	(477,822)	(457,524)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,201)	8,116	(23,299)	1,942



The true value of this service is priceless."

- Call panel doctor

Secretary's Report 2025 for Doctors' Health NSW

Introduction

2025 is our fourth year as a registered charity - and our biggest year yet.

Our purpose is simple: Support the health and wellbeing of doctors and medical students.

Highlights

- **24/7 Phone Support** - we supported 345 doctors and students who called for help
- **Experienced and specially trained** GPs on the phoneline
- **Training & Education** - 1,670+ participants in workshops, talks, and online sessions
- **Peer Connection & Research** - new programs linking doctors across career stages, plus targeted suicide postvention research for hospitals.

Financial Position

Strong and stable. Healthy reserves, balanced budget.

Every dollar goes where it matters most for doctors:

- Running the 24/7 phone line
- Expanding education and peer connection sessions
- Investing in new wellbeing initiatives and research.

The Road Ahead

Stay independent. Grow our programs. Expand awareness.

Secure the funding needed to maintain independent, high quality support for doctors and students into the future.

Ensure that every doctor in NSW is aware of our service

Dr Timothy West,
Secretary, Doctors' Health NSW



Meet the board directors at Doctors' Health NSW



Dr Ameeta Patel (Chair)
FRACGP, MBBS (Hons), DRANZCOG, GAICD

Ameeta lives on Lake Macquarie, works as a GP and takes calls for the Doctors' Health NSW 24/7 phonenumber. Her career spans leadership roles in medical regulation, Aboriginal health, rural healthcare, private practice and education. Having worked in Kenya, Qatar, and Alice Springs, she understands the challenges faced by international medical graduates. Outside of medicine, her interests include ceramics, gardening, travel and exploring the role of art in health.



Dr Penny Browne
MBBS, FRACGP, MHL, GAICD

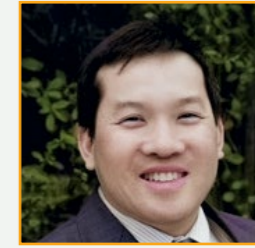
Penny, a GP, a board director and call taker on the 24/7 Doctors' Health NSW phone line. With years of experience mentoring future GPs and supporting doctors through medico-legal challenges, she is acutely aware of the stress her colleagues face. Penny remains a strong advocate for de-stigmatising discussions around doctors' health and providing mutual support within the profession.



Dr Timothy West BEng, MBBS, FRACP

Tim is a staff specialist in clinical immunology and allergy at Canberra Hospital. He previously served as Director of Physician Education and Assistant Director of Medicine at Campbelltown Hospital.

He has been a board member and company secretary of Doctors' Health NSW since 2018. Prior to medicine, he worked in IT at companies including Macquarie Bank and Telstra. Tim lives with his family in Canberra.



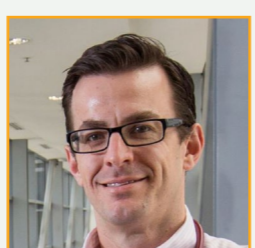
Dr Choong-Siew Yong
MBBS FRANZCP Cert Child Adol Psych MAICD FAMA

Choong-Siew is a consultant psychiatrist and Clinical Director of Child and Youth Mental Health at Northern Sydney LHD as well as a visiting medical officer at Murrumbidgee LHD. With a strong focus on medical workforce, education, and doctors' health, he has also chaired the Health Committee of the NSW Medical Council and taught at several universities. He has served as Vice-President (Federal) and President (NSW) of the Australian Medical Association and currently chairs the CEEMR for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.



Meredith McVey, OAM

Meredith spent over 10 years as the social worker and executive officer for the Medical Benevolent Association of NSW. She has also been involved with the Doctors' Health Advisory Service in NSW for more than a decade, serving on the management committee, as honorary secretary and now as a board member. Awarded an OAM in 2016 for her service to medicine, Meredith is deeply passionate about supporting doctors and understanding the immense pressures they face.



Dr Luke Morphett
BMed, FRACGP, BSc (Hons), GradDipGenetCouns

Luke is a Specialist GP, GP liaison officer at a large tertiary hospital and clinical lead for a government-funded website providing resources for doctors and health professionals. He strongly believes that supporting doctors' physical and mental health is crucial to a high-performing health system. This belief led him to join the board of Doctors' Health NSW, where he takes pride in the organisation's efforts to promote doctors' well-being.



Our independence is the foundation of trust. Doctors know we're not regulators or employers – we are experienced peers offering understanding and support."

Meet the medical director



Dr Kathryn Hutt, MBBS, BSc(Med), MPH, MA (Applied Ethics), GAICD

Kathryn is the medical director at Doctors' Health NSW, a part-time GP in Sydney and provides fly-in fly-out services to remote NSW. She also takes calls on the 24/7 Doctors' Health NSW phone line, listening to the experiences of doctors and students. As a former advisor to the NSW Medical Council, she understands the impact of the regulatory system on doctors and values access to safe support. With a focus on quality, safety, and ethics, Kathryn is passionate about her colleagues' wellbeing and advocates for strong clinical leadership and a kinder professional culture.

We need your support – help keep this vital service going

As an independent organisation, we rely on the medical profession to keep the Doctors' Health NSW service alive. Without more funding, our 24/7 confidential phonenumber is at risk and we won't be able to reach doctors where they work or study.



Donate

\$50

keeps the phonenumber open for a day

\$500

helps to train a new call panel doctor

\$1,000

funds an outreach visit to rural GPs and hospitals



Volunteer

Join our doctors-for-colleagues list



Promote

Share our posts, leaflets and phone number with your network

Keep our phone number handy so you can share it when needed: 02 9030 6552.



Support a colleague

Be available - suggest a coffee break

Be kind - not critical

Be a safe person your peers can turn to.

Give today. Volunteer. Share our message. Be a safe person so every doctor has somewhere to turn.

Thank you to our supporters and collaborators

Doctors' Health NSW would particularly like to thank our many collaborators in 2024 and 2025 as we work together in delivering care for doctors and students. We look forward to continuing to work with you – the relationships we build based on mutual trust, expertise and professionalism are invaluable.

Specifically, we acknowledge the work of the following organisations with whom we have worked closely and thank them for their ongoing commitment to doctors' health.

Doctors' Health Alliance	NSW Ministry of Health
AMA NSW	Black Dog Institute/ The Essential Network
Rural Fire Service NSW	Australian Medical Council
Primary Health Networks across NSW	Medical Benevolent Association NSW & ACT
Notre Dame University Medical School	Macquarie University Medical School
Local Health Districts and their staff from across NSW	Sydney University Medical School
RACGP NSW	AHPRA (NSW) and the NSW Medical Board
Drs4Drs	NSW Rural Doctors Network

Support. Connect. Respect.



It's not always easy to talk about how we really feel, but speaking to another doctor who understands can make all the difference. Please help us to keep answering the phone 24/7 with a tax-deductible donation: www.doctorshealth.org.au/donate-support



Contact us
www.doctorshealth.org.au
admin@dhas.org.au

DR
Doctors' Health NSW