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02 September 2022

The Honorable Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier of Western Australia  
Level 13, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier,

### **Mixed messaging about WA Doctors Industrial Agreement**

Negotiations for a replacement industrial agreement for medical practitioners in WA's public hospital system concluded on 28 June 2022, and I acknowledge the Minister for Health's role in securing agreement.

Following in-principle agreement and the end of bargaining, the revised WA Government public sector wages policy was announced on 31 July 2022. This provided 3 per cent increases per annum and a one-off \$2,500 cost-of-living payment to workers covered by industrial agreements. This was outlined in your media statement from 31 July 2022, announcing the new policy and in a global message sent to all WA Health staff most recently on 11 August 2022.

It has been proposed to us that the policy of 3 per cent this year will not apply to doctors, but your messaging of 11 August suggests it will. Notably, your e-mail message to all doctors did not say the new wages policy would not apply to doctors, and consequently many doctors have contacted us in recent weeks expressing confusion regarding the applicability of the new wages policy, given government messaging.

We have suggested to members it will not apply, and they have expressed frustration with the mixed messaging and disappointment at their potential exclusion, at a time when so much is being asked of an already overburdened and demoralised workforce. The AMA (WA) understands that a number are considering resignation.

The AMA (WA) strongly believes that WA's public hospital doctors deserve the new government wages policy of 3 per cent per annum as suggested in your correspondence of 11 August 2022, and that doctors should receive the 3 per cent salary increase from 1 July 2022. We also consider that as in-principal agreement was in place prior to your announcement, that doctors were at that time covered by a new industrial agreement, with registration by the WA Industrial Relations Commission pending. Precedence for such application of new wages policy has already been set for teachers.

This could be an opportunity to invigorate an otherwise demoralised and tired workforce. We seek clarification if the 3 percent will apply to doctors in 2022 as suggested, or if our informal advice that it will not, is the case?

If it is the case that the new wages policy you announced after the completion of negotiations will not apply in 2022, we seek your reasoning so we can convey this to our members and hopefully avoid said resignations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MDJ', written over a white background.

Dr Mark Duncan-Smith  
**President**  
MBBS FRACS GCGOVM MAICD