



# A Better Culture

## The Newsletter

[abetterculture.org.au](http://abetterculture.org.au)

FEB 2024



### RECAP OF PROJECT PHASE 1

A Better Culture aims to improve the psychosocial safety of healthcare workers, leading to better workplace culture and improved quality and safety of healthcare.

Phase 1 saw the development of our 12 reference groups, formation of our distinguished and diverse advisory board and the project gained exposure through conference, collegiate, and peak health body engagement, along with membership forums.

Phase 1 of the project has successfully concluded, and we are excited to announce the commencement of phase 2.

### PROJECT PHASE 2

A Better Culture phase 2 has commenced and, after consultation with key organisations and grassroots stakeholders, it has been endorsed by the Advisory Board. The phase 2 work program will deliver an overarching national framework for change, with 3 thematic focus areas:

1. Setting expectations for workplace behaviour
2. Career-long learning and development
3. Holding ourselves and the system to account

The reference groups will continue to have key influence during phase 2. There will be five working groups who will consult with the reference groups as they build their outputs.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

A comprehensive environmental scan has commenced and will serve as the foundation of the deliverables for the second phase of the project.

The first phase of the environmental scan was to invite medical colleges to provide information about policies, programmes and training they have in place.

To date, most colleges have provided the information, with a few still working on it.

#### Acknowledgement of Country

A Better Culture acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia and extends gratitude for their contributions to health and healing. We pay respect to Elders and ancestors past and present and acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded.



First and foremost, I am delighted to introduce our expanded project team, which has grown significantly to better support our mission. We welcome Komal Daredia as our new Project Manager, Michael Felix Nyeche as the Project Officer, and Maddy Roberts as our second Project Administrator, joining Jade Rameka in her current role. Recruitment for the Senior Medical Advisor position is progressing well, with interviews underway.

### CEO'S UPDATE

Our reference groups have also been refreshed to ensure focused membership and clarity of expectations. I am pleased to report that all reference groups now have reconfirmed chairs and membership, with ongoing dialogues aimed at increasing engagement.

Additionally, our phase 2 work program has established five working groups, each focusing on crucial themes such as workplace behaviour, career-long learning and development, and accountability. Feedback on working group terms of reference (TOR) has been solicited, and the environmental scan, a cornerstone of our framework, is well underway.

Looking ahead, we have a busy year ahead of us, with high-level milestones set for each phase of our project. With the enhanced capacity of our project secretariat and the dedication of our team members, I am confident that we will achieve tangible outcomes by the end of this year. Lastly, I would like to thank each of you for your ongoing support and commitment to our cause. Together, we can create a better culture in healthcare training that benefits all stakeholders.

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### MTS Survey Submission

A Better Culture has put forth recommendations to the Medical Board of Australia regarding the Medical Training Survey.

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#### Advisory Board

The Advisory Board of A Better Culture convened for its second meeting, chaired by Dr. Helen Szoke AO. The meeting which took place on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, marked the first for the year and set a promising tone for the project's next phase.

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**Upcoming Conference**



Dr. Jillann Farmer FRACMA, CEO A Better Culture

**Creative Careers in Medicine Conference**

Session: Creative Solutions for Herculean Problems Fixing Culture in Healthcare

Date: Saturday, 9th March, 2024,

Time: 11:15 - 11:35



**Testimonial**

**Safe to be Our Imperfect Selves**

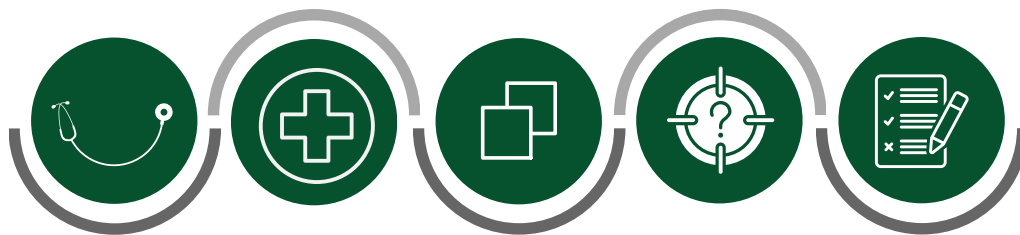
Dr Emily Harrison, FACRRM ~

Rural Generalist

**We idealize doctors as superhuman, infallible beings devoid of emotions or weakness.** This perception begins in medical school and persists throughout training, reinforcing the expectation of perfection. When we encounter traumatic experiences in our careers such as heart-breaking clinical cases and mistreatment from colleagues, the expectation is that we will be tough and suppress our emotions. When mistakes or failure occur, they are met with blame and shame, creating a culture that neglects the emotions, values, and experiences of doctors as humans. We must acknowledge the profound impact that this culture of perfectionism, shame and blame has on doctors at all levels. Where perfectionism, competition, criticism, and fear of failure are prevalent, imposter syndrome, burnout, depression, and anxiety are common. We all play a role in the creation of, and maintenance of this culture. Not just as victims but also perpetrators. At times, we will all unintentionally act in ways that contradict our personal values and perpetuate the cycle of shame and perfectionism. We must pause and reflect on our behaviour and consider how we have contributed. In these moments we must resist the temptation to choose comfort over courage. Instead, we can come to terms with our impact and take the essential steps to dismantling and rebuilding for positive change. **Transformation in culture requires us to flatten the hierarchy, embrace complexity, learn from mistakes, and encourage clinical courage.**

**MTS Survey Submission**

**MTS 2023 Survey Results**



54% experienced and/or witnessed bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism

35% reported experiencing and/or witnessing bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism

Most common behaviour: Bullying: 12% experienced, 18% witnessed

Main source of behaviours, Senior medical staff; 45% experienced, 47% witnessed

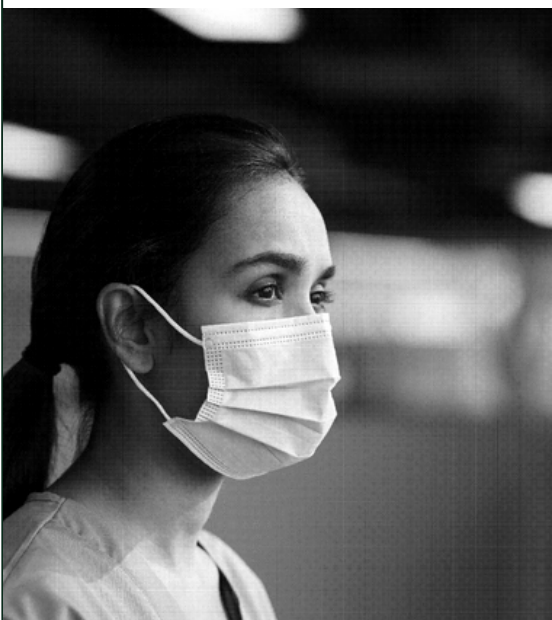
68% who experienced and 75% who witnessed did not report the incident

The Medical Training Survey, MTS, has over the years become a vital tool used to gather insights into the experiences of medical trainees including their perceptions of the learning environment, interactions with colleagues and supervisors, and overall satisfaction with their training.

A Better Culture has put forth recommendations to the Medical Board of Australia regarding improvement of the Medical Training Survey. The summary of our recommendations is as follows:

1. That the Medical Board consider more targeted communications about the Survey for health service and hospital boards, to build their understanding of the culture of their hospitals.
2. That the Board review its confidentiality and privacy assurances and ensure that these are consistently and repeatedly communicated, specifically highlighting that employers will not be able to identify respondents, and that individual data is not held by the Board and so cannot influence any decisions the Board may make about registration.
3. That the Board expand its exploration of racism experienced and witnessed by trainees.
4. That the MTS creates clear and specific linkages between reported behaviours and “who was responsible”.
5. That all data from the MTS, in all reports, be presented with gender disaggregation, expressed as total, and with male, female and non-binary (where applicable) reported separately unless minimum data group sizes would be breached in so doing.
6. That the Board add a specific question/s about sexual harassment to the MTS dataset.

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about” – Margaret J Wheatley



**You Deserve Better**



## Dr. Jillann Farmer

CEO, A Better Culture

Dr Jillann Farmer was the Medical Director of the United Nations, based at its headquarters in New York for 8 years. Since leaving the UN, she has worked as a Deputy Director General for Queensland Health and as a front-line clinician in primary care and emergency medicine. Jillann is currently the Chief Executive Officer of “A Better Culture”, a project to shift the culture of medical practice to one of respect, inclusion and equity.



## Komal Daredia

Project Manager

Komal has led large-scale and national projects in the health, education, and community services sectors. She has a keen focus on utilising evidence-based strategies to achieve meaningful outcomes and is passionate about improving health for all. Komal holds an MBA in Health Management and an MSc in Biotechnology.



## Michael Felix Nyeche

Project Officer

Michael is an accomplished professional with a diverse background spanning Research, Public Relations, Communications, Public Health Policy, and Project Management. Michael has led project initiatives in ICT, healthcare, education, and government. He is committed to contributing positively to social change. He holds a master's degree in Global Public Health and Social Justice from London and certificate in Project Management in Global Health from Washington. Michael is excited to bring his multidisciplinary expertise to the team as Project Officer.



## Maddy Roberts

Project Administrator

Maddy is joining the team as a Project Administrator for “A Better Culture”. She has 4 years of experience working in administration in both the private and public health sectors, where she enjoyed working alongside a wide array of healthcare professionals. She is keen to help out behind the scenes wherever she can and feels very grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to such an important project.



## Jade Rameka

Project Administrator

Jade is an administrative professional with a wealth of experience in managing operations within the mental health, private health, and disability sector. Jade currently serves as one of the administrators for “A Better Culture”. Here, she channels her expertise into a meaningful initiative dedicated to cultivating positive change.

