

## Why did you get involved with ASMOF and the Union Movement?

I've always enjoyed being involved, engaged and political processes. I respond best when I can fight from the high moral ground rather than self-interest, when my compassion extends towards my colleagues and what they endure on a daily basis in their quest for quality healthcare for all Australians. Coming from a place where I had a great deal of responsibility leading groups of professionals already, the tipping point was when Professor Duggin (the President of ASMOF at the time) asked me to join council. I saw this as a way to effect change for and on behalf of my colleagues.



this issue  
Dr Tony Sara

## Exploring unionism and becoming a president.

Dr Tony Sara gave us the opportunity for a quick chat. He was on his way to a meeting that obviously deserved more time and attention than our article, but he kindly managed to chat to us candidly about his career, what made him a unionist and what he is hoping for the future. Below are excerpts of our chat.

*Dr Sara, why did you become a doctor?*

I wanted to make a difference. To effect change in the care of people, and ultimately to give back to the community and society.

*Looking back, are there any differences between the 'expectations' of the job and your 'experiences' of the job?*

Being young, naïve and altruistic, I did not realise that altruism is harder to sustain in the thick of long days, busy days, stressful days. Being a doctor is not for the faint of heart. It wears on you physically, mentally and emotionally. It can put massive strain on your relationships and on your down-time. It is far too easy to get lost in the systems of knowledge, the meetings, the schedules and forget why you started this journey in the process. I have found it helps to keep 'this reason' as a constant focus in the back of my mind. To remind myself that I am here precisely because I want to care for others.

*Why do you volunteer with ASMOF and how would you suggest someone gets started in volunteering with their Union?*

To be engaged in the workplace, to speak up... to contact the Union. Teaching hospitals are the crucible of the medical profession and we represent the medical profession at its core because of the training aspect. It's all the more important we speak up and represent our colleagues.

**“Be engaged, be involved  
in the worksite &  
be a member of the council.  
Help shape the profession.”**

*Do you have one suggestion for JMO's that might help them endure training?*

To be a good and effective Doctor, you must give up some of yourself. You have to be committed your craft group and your patients. That being said, you also need to learn to cut yourself some slack and think of your own physical and mental health.

*What can you see yourself doing in 10 years' time?*

I'll be significantly retired or certainly close. Of course being a grandfather who is present more and has the time to focus on the grandchildren.