

NT Clinical Educator of the Year 2025

Dr Dayna Duncan



Dr. Dayna Duncan has profoundly impacted the prevocational medical education landscape in the Northern Territory, particularly at Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional Hospitals. As a rural generalist trainee and Medical Education Registrar with NT Health, she has developed and implemented a comprehensive, NT-specific curriculum for PGY1 and PGY2+ doctors. This includes a structured, longitudinal teaching program starting with intern orientation and progressively building throughout the year, covering NT-specific topics, procedural skills, and practical sessions relevant to the local context. She also developed and launched an IMG Bootcamp to support international graduates in settling into the NT health system. Her teaching is informed by regular positive feedback from participants and a purposeful approach that advances the excellence of prevocational doctor education in the Northern Territory.

In 2023, Dr. Duncan received the National Prevocational Doctor Award and has continued to significantly contribute to teaching PGY1/2 doctors. Every fortnight, she works one day as a renal registrar, supporting one of the busiest and most demanding units in Australia, and serves as the clinical lead and facilitator with Flinders University. Despite her demanding workload, she consistently dedicates additional time on the wards each day to teach her junior colleagues.

Dr. Duncan's innovations include a structured, responsive education curriculum, a targeted IMG Bootcamp, and the revitalization of a Junior Medical Officer Forum (JMO) to foster peer-to-peer dialogue and shared ownership of education quality. The JMO Forum has proven to be a standout success, encouraging honest and constructive feedback that directly leads to improvements in teaching, rostering, and clinical workflow. She has proactively written the entire RMO and intern program in advance for the year, demonstrating a deep understanding of what needs to come first in teaching.

As a mentor in both formal and informal settings, Dr. Duncan supports PGY1 and PGY2 doctors with career planning, training applications, and day-to-day professional challenges. Her deep understanding of the prevocational doctor landscape makes her the first port of call when navigating difficult workplace issues. She co-developed and implemented a Peer Mentoring Program for interns, advocating for the program at the executive level, helping formalize its structure, and leading by example as both a mentor and facilitator.

Dr. Duncan is a respected advocate for prevocational doctors, assisting peers with rostering requirements, scope of practice, and escalation pathways. She holds leadership roles across various organizations, including the Australian Postgraduate Medical Education Council (APMEC), Australian Medical Association Northern Territory (AMA NT) Council, Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN) Clinical Council, and the Confederation of Postgraduate Medical Education Councils (CPMEC) Board. Over the past two years, she has contributed significantly to NT Prevocational Medical Assurance Services, serving as a surveyor and advocating for PGY1/2 doctors, as well as supporting the accreditation of NT and other units across Australia. She has played a key role in achieving local roster reform, improving education time, and enhancing representation for junior doctors at every level of decision-making.

Dr. Duncan's commitment to wellbeing is embedded in everything she does, from formal advocacy to personal mentorship. She supports prevocational doctors in managing potential burnout, creating safe boundaries, and advocating for respectful treatment. She was instrumental in developing the peer mentoring program, which offers relational support to new interns, easing their transition into the workforce. Her significant contributions and dedicated efforts in the JMO Forum have provided junior doctors with a safe platform to raise issues and feel heard. Through the RMO Advocacy and Social Societies, she supports morale and connection. Her ongoing efforts around rostering reform and safe clinical practice are just as much about wellbeing as they are about workforce management.

As a rural generalist trainee and former intern in Central Australia, Dr. Duncan is deeply committed to equitable rural education. She integrates Territory-specific and culturally relevant content into teaching and ensures doctors on rural placements have access via remote or hybrid teaching methods. The IMG Bootcamp has been particularly valuable for doctors working in Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2–7 zones who face unique systemic and cultural challenges. At a policy level, Dr. Duncan continues to represent the interests of rural junior doctors through her work with the CPMEC Board, NT PHN, and JMO Forum, ensuring that rural voices are not only heard but actively shape the future of medical education in the NT.

In summary, Dr. Dayna Duncan has made significant contributions to the education, advocacy, and wellbeing of junior doctors in the Northern Territory, particularly in rural and remote settings. Her innovative programs, mentorship, and leadership have positively impacted the medical community, and her dedication continues to shape the future of medical education in the region.