

Parnis, Stephen James (1969 -)

Stephen Parnis, born 2 July 1969, is the eldest son of Emanuel Parnis (Public Servant) and Christina Parnis nee Borg (Executive Assistant). He was educated at St Paul's Primary School, West Sunshine, St John's College, Braybrook, and Xavier College, Kew 1983-86. He graduated MBBS, University of Melbourne 1992. He obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Surgical Anatomy, University of Melbourne 2000 and became a Fellow, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 2007, and a Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors 2016.

Stephen's career has been as a Consultant Emergency Physician, initially at Bendigo Health 2007-09, then at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne 2009-current, and at Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital 2017-current. He also previously served at John Fawkner Private Hospital (Healthscope), Coburg 2009-18 and Werribee Mercy Hospital 2018-21. As part of his consultant role he is a Senior Instructor in Emergency Management of Severe Trauma (RACS) 2010-current. He is Senior Lecturer, Bendigo Regional Clinical School, Monash University 2007-09, and a Clinical Fellow, Plunkett Centre for Ethics, Australian Catholic University 2024-present.

Stephen has been actively involved in medical politics from his student days. He was Chair, Melbourne University Student Union 1991 and a member, AMA Council of Doctors in Training 2004-6. He became a non-executive director of AMA Victoria from 2006-2014, and chaired the Industrial Relations Committee AMA Victoria 2007-12. He was elected President, AMA Victoria 2012-14, and was Chair of the Board for this period.

Major achievements during his period with AMAV include:

- Enhanced security arrangements for public hospitals – funding, emergency department design, staffing
- State Government commitments to expand public hospital bed numbers
- Guaranteed places for Internships for all Victorian Medical Graduates in Public Hospitals
- Restoration of Mildura Hospital to public administration
- Expansion of Advance Care Directives in Palliative Care
- Controls on smoking in outdoor dining areas in City of Melbourne
- Real-Time Prescription Monitoring
- Establishment of Safe Injecting Centres
- Community Access of Narcotic Drug Antidote
- Victorian Public Hospital Doctor Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2013

Concurrently with his work with AMA Victoria, Stephen also had major roles with AMA nationally. This began with his role as Federal Councillor, Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation 2006-15. During this time he became a Federal Councillor, Australian Medical Association 2011-16, with active participation in:

- Health Financing & Economics Committee 2013-16
- Medical Workforce Committee 2013-16
- Public Health Committee 2012-16
- Ethics & Medicolegal Committee 2014-16.

He was elected Vice President, Australian Medical Association 2014-16, and awarded Fellowship of the Australian Medical Association, 2014.

Major achievements during his period with Federal AMA include:

- Reversal of Abbott Government imposition of Medicare GP copayment
- Establishment of a National Physical Activity Strategy
- Climate Change Health Impact Policy & Program
- Establishment of National Health Service for Doctors, funded by Medical Board of Australia
- Protection of Asylum Seeker Access to Health Care
- Australian Government involvement in International Response to Ebola Epidemic in West Africa
- Reform of Complaints Handling Process by Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Authority

Separately from his AMA work, Stephen has been active in several other roles. These include:

Medical Insurance Group of Australia 2019-current, serving as Board Chair 2023-current.

Hearing Australia 2023-current.

Australian Care Alliance Founding Member, 2018-current

Guardian Australia Opinion Writer, 2020-current; Media Commentator on Health & Ethical Matters

He has been an Invited/Keynote Speaker to state & national professional conferences. He was Medical Adviser/Commentator during Covid Pandemic (2020-22) Victorian and Nationally. He was also Leader of the case against legalisation of Voluntary Assisted Dying in Victoria 2017, and subsequent debates in other Australian Jurisdictions.

Stephen's first marriage was to Carolyn Anne Hay (1996-2016), and second marriage to Dr Fiona Jane Reilly (2021-present). He has three children - Rachel Anne Parnis (b. 2000), Luke Stephen Parnis (b.2002), Rebecca Christina Parnis (b. 2008).

Last updated 8 February 2025.

Source: self-report

Draft compiled by Allan Mawdsley

