A young Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) doctor with a passion for the health of the people of the South Pacific and for the welfare of her junior colleagues has been named the Australian Medical Association (AMA) Doctor in Training of the Year 2018.

Dr Mikaela Seymour is a general surgical principal house officer at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) and manages to combine her hospital work with her role as an associate lecturer at the University of Queensland, service with the Australian Army as a Captain in the 2nd Health Support Company at Gallipoli Barracks, and volunteer work in remote Papua New Guinea.

Dr Seymour says it was an honour to be awarded AMA Doctor in Training of the Year 2018.

“This award was particularly special as it was peer nominated. Being acknowledged by colleagues who understand the difficulties of Junior Doctor life helps keep me motivated to try and be the best doctor possible for any patients in my care,” Dr Seymour said.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that Dr Seymour had built up an impressive record of community service and advocacy at such an early stage of her career.

“In addition to her humanitarian work, Dr Seymour is a passionate advocate for junior doctor quality supervision and training, and for the wellbeing of doctors in training,” Dr Gannon said.

“Dr Seymour is the purest example of a young leader within our ranks who advocates for the welfare and training of her junior colleagues and provides care to those less fortunate.”

In her final year at Griffith University, Dr Seymour was selected for the Queensland Rural Medical Education Placement to Western Province, the largest and most remote province in Papua New Guinea.

The experience left a lasting impact on her, in particular the need for timely surgical access as a fundamental health care right, regardless of location.

Dr Seymour has returned to Papua New Guinea five times to volunteer as a doctor in training, studying alongside PNG specialists and volunteering on the YWAM medical ship, delivering primary health care to some of the most remote villages in PNG.

While volunteering at Kiunga District Hospital, Dr Seymour was shocked by the impact that critically low anti-malarial supplies were having on patient treatment.
In 2017, she coordinated a malaria prescription service and record database of anti-malarial use. This simple intervention has proved to have a real clinical impact on patient outcomes in the past 12 months, and is now supported financially by Rotarians Against Malaria.

In addition to her humanitarian work, Dr Seymour is a passionate advocate for junior doctor quality supervision and training, and for the wellbeing of doctors in training.

“The future of medicine is changing rapidly. Use of technology will hopefully improve patient outcomes drastically, and junior doctors must be ready to adapt and train in new techniques.

“As junior doctors we work hard for our patients, often at the expense of our own families and wellbeing and need to be mindful of looking after each other so we can care for others. This is something SCUH does really well, and the caring environment reflects the Sunshine Coast community which we serve. I hope my varied experiences can help me continue to connect with patients and achieve optimal health” Dr Seymour said.

Dr Seymour was presented with her award at the Leadership Development Dinner at the AMA National Conference.

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Media Opportunity:
Dr Seymour can be available for interviews/photos on request.