



## RURAL SURGERY SECTION NEWSLETTER

JULY 2019

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### CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Dear Section members,

I am excited to be writing to you for the first time as the Chair of RACS Rural Surgery Section and I hope that for the coming years we can build on the success of previous work accomplished by past Chairs and committee members.

It's a good time to be in rural health advocacy, with high levels of engagement from both levels of government and stakeholders.

My fellow committee members are a talented and energetic group, actively working in and for rural health and I look forward to amplifying their efforts and to developing the next generation of rural surgical leaders.

My focus will be on working collaboratively with others who share our goal of equitable access to surgical care for rural Australians. I aim to foster a culture of collective responsibility for rural surgical services within the surgical profession. I am advocating for effective application of the existing evidence of how to build a sustainable surgical workforce, through selection for rurality and training for rurality, with positive rural work experience built into all training programs. I see rurality as a diversity element, with a need for rural surgeons to be represented on all RACS and specialty society boards, committees, selection panels and examiner panels.

I encourage all rural surgical section members to contact me to share your experience and your ideas for innovative ways of delivering rural surgical services. Combining our collective wisdom will increase our effectiveness.



**Dr Bridget Clancy**  
**Chair, RACS Rural Surgery Section**

### **New Rural Surgery Section Committee members**

A big welcome to newly appointed Rural Surgery Section committee members.

- Dr Sabu Thomas – new NT representative
- Dr Roderick McMurray – new RACSTA representative

Thank you to **Dr Sally Butchers** who served as Chair for the past two years, and as rural representative on the State committee. Her passionate leadership and advocacy for rural health has been exemplary within the College externally at the Federal level.

Members of the Rural Surgery Section Committee 2019/2020 are listed below.

#### **Members**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dr Bridget Clancy       | Chair (VIC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Otolaryngology          |
| Dr Jacinta Cover        | Deputy Chair (WA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | General Surgery         |
| Dr Sarah Coll           | Member (Qld), Councillor                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Orthopaedic Surgery     |
| Dr Jenny Chambers       | Member (NSW), Councillor                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Vascular Surgery        |
| Mr Jonathon Mulford     | Member (Tas)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Orthopaedic Surgery     |
| Dr Shehnarz Salindera   | Member (NSW)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | General Surgery         |
| Mr Sabu Thomas          | Member (NT)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | General Surgery         |
| Mr Julian Speight       | Member (NZ)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | General Surgery         |
| Dr John Lengyel         | Member (NZ)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | General Surgery         |
| Mr Adrian Aitken        | Member (VIC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | General Surgery         |
| Mr Quentin Ralph        | Member (SA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | General Surgery         |
| Dr Damian Fry           | Co-opted (QLD), Clinical Director Rural Coach Program                                                                                                                                                                                        | General Surgery         |
| Mr Mahiban Thomas       | Rural representative to Trauma Committee (NT)                                                                                                                                                                                                | General Surgery         |
| Dr Roderick McMurray    | RACSTA Representative (WA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | General Surgery Trainee |
| Dr Melinda Van Oosterum | Co-opted (NSW)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | General Surgery         |
| Mr Brian Kirkby         | Co-opted (Qld), Rural representative, Board in General Surgery, Acting Rural Representative, Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (CCRTGE), Rural Representative to the RACS Endoscopy Committee | General Surgery         |

## ADVOCACY WORK

### **COAG National Medical Workforce Strategy forums**

The Australian Commonwealth Department of Health held three COAG strategy forums to engage medical professionals in the development of a national approach to medical workforce planning and policy development. Committee members were busy representing RACS and rural surgery at the Sydney, Mount Gambier and Perth forums.

We encourage the Government to hold similar forums in other states and territories to understand the unique set of workforce maldistribution issues faced by each region.

### **Key changes within the Health Workforce Program - Modified Monash Model classification update**



From 1 July 2019, updates to the geographical classifications used in health workforce programs will be available on the DoctorConnect [website](#). The Modified Monash Model classification will be used to determine eligibility for a range of health workforce programs including the Rural Bulk Billing Incentive.

### **External representations**

In addition to representing rural surgery at forums, committee members have been actively promoting rural surgery at external conferences.

I presented on the topic of [Equity, Collectivism and Effective Altruism; Solutions for increasing ENT care in rural and remote Australia](#) to the [Australian Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery](#) Annual Scientific Meeting. Past Chair Dr Sally Butcher presented on rural surgical pathways and support offered for rural medical students and doctors interested in surgery and rural practice at the [15th National Rural Health Conference](#). I also discussed rural specialist career choices and pathways at the Victorian Rural Health Conference as a presenter and panellist.

### **STP support projects**

We have been involved in development of various STP support projects at the College which aim to enhance rural training networks. The first project initiative will be identifying the barriers and challenges for the application and continuation of rural surgical training. The second project proposal will focus on clinical research opportunities in the rural hospitals for STP funded trainees.

We acknowledge the Professional Development and Research & Evaluation Departments for spearheading these initiatives.

### **Rural Coach program – Clinical Director**

The [Rural Coach Program](#) have been providing support and mentoring to surgical trainees since its establishment in 2011.

The Program is led by the new Clinical Director Dr Damian Fry. Based in Queensland, he was recently conferred his Fellowship in General Surgery at the Bangkok 2019 ASC and is very happy to have contact with any Trainees considering a rural surgical career. The Program also offers grants to attend the annual Provincial Surgeons of Australia conference.

Trainees who are involved or interested in rural surgery and the Rural Coach program are encouraged to contact [rural@surgeons.org](mailto:rural@surgeons.org) for information on how to join.

## SAVE THE DATES

- [RACS SA, NT & WA Annual Scientific Meeting, Thursday 5 – Saturday 7 September 2019, Robots in Surgery - Tsunami or just the next wave?, Port Lincoln Hotel, Port Lincoln, South Australia](#)
- [Provincial Surgeons of Australia \(PSA\) Scientific Meeting 2019 \(Held in conjunction with the 2019 Rural ANZCA SIG\), Saturday 2 – Monday 4 November 2019, Operating in a Big Country: Enhancing Outcomes from Major Surgery in Provincial Cities, Mercure Ballarat, Victoria](#)
- [RACS Tasmanian Annual Scientific Meeting, Friday 8 – Saturday 9 November 2019, Fat Robots - Obesity and the Role of Robots in Surgery, Peppers Silo Resort, Launceston](#)
- [Australasian Doctors' Health Conference 2019, Friday 22 – Saturday 23 November 2019, Creating a Healthy Workplace, Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, Western Australia](#)