



GRATITUDE REPORT 2023

A letter from the Chair

To our donors,

On the behalf of the RACS Foundation for Surgery, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your support throughout 2023. This past year has once again endured many challenges with global economic and financial troubles, cost of living stress, conflicts, as well as the financial sustainability issues faced by RACS which has impacted our members. However, because of the generosity of our donors and their support, the Foundation for Surgery has been able to fund activities allowing access to surgical care, to those who need it in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and in the Pacific Region; education and mentoring; and scholarships and grants.

Over the past year, the Foundation has been able to support and assist with a number of projects through the RACS Global Health program. The incredible achievements of the Global Health program and are outlined further in the report.

The Foundation has supported the Indigenous and Māori communities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, respectively, by providing funding for the coordination and hosting of the Indigenous Health Hui in March 2023, and the production of a video from the Indigenous Health program at the 2023 RACS Annual Scientific Congress.

The Foundation for Surgery Committee has been working through its 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. In June 2023, the Foundation implemented a new donation platform which is more user friendly, open to anyone wishing to donate, and reduces the barriers that donors had found when donating through the previous process. The Committee has also limited the amount of printing and physical material sent to donors and moved predominantly to electronic messages. This was done in response to requests by donors, as well as being mindful to reduce the environmental impact and cost save.

This year, the Foundation for Surgery Committee said farewell to its Philanthropic and Engagement Co-Ordinator, Vanessa Bramfitt; and welcomed Sue Pleass, as Program Lead, Scholarships and Grants. Sue will be responsible for establishing and managing the scholarships and grants from the Foundation for Surgery side and leading engagement with donors of scholarships and grants.

The Foundation for Surgery Committee and team look forward to 2024, achieving the remainder of the Strategic Plan goals and working with you, our donors, to continue its vision. To all of you and your families, the Foundation for Surgery wishes you a wonderful year for 2024.

Sincerely,



John Batten
Chair, Foundation for Surgery

Impact in Action

Dr Gray, was required to meet some formal requirements to be able to undertake specific procedures which were offered in France. Dr Gray received the Morgan Travel Fellowship Grant.

"I had to take three months out of my practice, and the Fellowship helped cover airfares and living allowance, for which I am very thankful. Economically, the Fellowship grant was quite significant as I had to fund myself. The practical use of these skills quickly became apparent. Since my return, these skills have become an integral part of my practice, and this has been immensely beneficial. I can now address various aspects of patient care, providing a comprehensive approach without the need to involve multiple doctors in their treatment."

Dr Andrew Gray, FRACS
Recipient of the Morgan Travelling Fellowship Grant

"It was amazing to see the strength in the numbers of Māori surgeons and surgical trainees and the strength in culture of all of these doctors and yourself. It made me understand what a resilient lot Indigenous surgeons are. I've been reflecting on what we can all do to better support them."

AIDA Representative
Attendee at the Indigenous Health Hui, March 2023

Watch the video to see the impact of the RACS Global Health Program





Indigenous Health Hui, March 2023

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori Health

Indigenous Health Hui, 2023

The Foundation for Surgery provided funding to the Indigenous Health Committee to co-ordinate and host the Indigenous Health Hui. The Hui was held in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand in March 2023. Fifty Australian First Nation and Aotearoa Maori delegates attended. The aim of the event was for delegates to workshop content, program proposals and Indigenous Health Strategies derived from learnings of the past and present. Information from the hui will be used to plan future changes required to building the indigenous surgical workforce and addressing indigenous health inequities

Te Rau Poka: Maori Surgical Trainee Academy

Since 2021, the Foundation for Surgery has provided funding support for the co-ordination of the Maori Surgical Trainee Academy. In August 2023, the Foundation for Surgery Committee agreed to continue supporting this for another three years. The objective of this academy is to develop a surgical pathway to increase recruitment of Maori into surgical training, ensure successful qualification, and provide early career support. the academy identifies Maori at secondary school, university and in junior medical roles and assists them to develop skills and competencies facilitating entry and successful passage through SET training.

Video Production

Funding was given to the Indigenous Health team to document and produce a video of the indigenous Health program at the 2023 RACS Annual Scientific Congress. The video took a narrative approach to capture the significance of the program, and will be able to be used, along with cut shorts and reels, for use in promotion activities, an asset for promulgation of Indigenous Health, as well as an opportunity to tell the story of Indigenous Health in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand more broadly than before.

**Indo-Pacific Clinicians
trained in surgical
technique with support from
a Visiting Medical Team.**



**RACS Global Health Volunteers during the
Cook Islands VMT with national colleagues**



**Solomon Islands Ear, Nose and Throat
team train national surgeons**

18

**Globally accredited medical
and nursing training programs
completed across the Indo-
Pacific Region with 288
national clinicians**



**Clinicians at Guido Valadares National Hospital
in Dili, Timor Leste proudly display their
certificates in Basic Life Support training**

19

**Visiting Medical
Team deployments to
13 countries across
the globe**

- 19 Visiting Medical Teams were deployed in 2023 composed of surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, audiologists and deployed across 13 countries to work in partnership with national clinicians and patients.
- 1,100 clinical consultations provided to patients with more than 500 patients receiving life changing surgical procedures.
- 15 nurses from the Pacific Region graduating with a Post Graduate Certificate in Peri-Operative Nursing from Australian College of Nursing.

- 18 accredited training courses have been provided to 288 national clinicians, including Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS), Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST) and Care of the Critically Ill Surgical Patient (CCrISP).
- 17 Indo-Pacific clinicians received endoscopy training from Australia New Zealand Gastroenterology Training Association (ANZGITA) and Fiji National University (FNU) funded through RACS Global Health.

500

patients have received life changing and life saving surgical procedures in 2023 through the work of RACS Global Health VMTS working with national clinicians.



Patients in Dili, Timor Leste wait for review and surgical treatment.



Rowan Nicks Global Health Scholars Dr Tika Ram Adhikari with supervisor Professor Kelvin Kong.

6

RACS Global Health Scholars deployed to Australia to receive specialist training.

Scholarships and Grants

28

2023 Research
Scholarship
Recipients

43

2023 Learning and
Development
Grant Recipients

Due to the generosity of our donors, living and through bequests, RACS is able to offer one of the largest surgical research scholarships and learning and development grants programs in the world. By offering the exceptional range of scholarships and grants, recipients are able to enhance their careers, increase their knowledge and ultimately lead to better surgical care of patients.

Some of 2023 recipients shared acceptance videos and details of what they will use their scholarship or grant for. Here are a few examples:





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