



Royal Australasian

College of Surgeons

Te Whare Piki Ora o Māhutonga



Te Rau Poka

Kawerongo

HOTOKE/Winter, June 2026

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Mihimihi – Kaiārahi update

Waiho I te toipoto, kaua I te toiroa

Welcome to the June newsletter at the half-way point of 2026. This is the busy time of year for Te Rau Poka. We have started presentations to Māori secondary school students completing full day events in Palmerston North and New Plymouth, with further events planned around the country.

The Wānanga Whakarite was held in Wellington at RACS on May 16. Ten SET applicants in General Surgery, Orthopedics, Urological Surgery, ORL and Paediatric Surgery practiced and refined interview techniques. The SET interviews are happening this week in Wellington. Best wishes to all candidates!

Finally, congratulations to Jamie-Lee Rahiri (General Surgery) and Zanazir Alexander (Orthopaedic Surgery) who were successful in the FEX examination in May. Whakanuia!

Currently we have 42 Māori Surgeons and 30 SET trainees across five specialties in Aotearoa.

Manaakitanga- Pastoral care and support

One of the goals of Te Rautaki Māori is to make RACS a safe place to identify as a Māori person. This includes Fellows, SET and staff. Our contract for dedicated counsellor has been discontinued this year but we are still here to support you all.

The College has a process for managing complaints around bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment. See the website [Our process | RACS](#). You may also contact Prof Jonathan Koea directly Jonathan.Koea@surgeons.org

Wānanga Whakarite 16 May 2026

The first Te Rau Poka event kicked off this year in Wellington. Te Wānanga Whakarite was held at the RACS office. Ten teina (SET applicants) and 8 Tuakana (Surgeons and trainees) were in attendance to run applicants through the interview process. Thanks to all who attended and supported this Kaupapa. We look forward to hearing how the applicants get on with their interviews.

ASC ki te Urupū 3-6 May, 2026

Te Rau Poka was represented at the ASC in Perth. Tess Green, manager of the Foundation for Surgery invited us to share their booth in the Exhibitors hall. It was great to have a dedicated space at the ASC where we could talk with surgeons about the work we do to increase and develop the Māori surgical workforce.



He Whakaruruhau – Cultural Safety Project

For the last three years College management and staff have been attending cultural safety wānanga hosted by the Council for Medical Colleges. Organised and lead by Shirley Simmonds, and the CMC in partnership with Te ORA Māori Doctors Association the wānanga aim to assist the Colleges to implement cultural safety.

In response to requests by some of the specialty surgical societies, this project was initiated by the Māori Health Advisory Group and aligns with the Hononga/Partnerships objective of Te Rautaki Māori. The Foundation for Surgery has funded this project for two years.

Amokura Panoho is the director of Kura Consulting and brings with her twenty plus years of experience in supporting businesses to develop their strategic plans. Amokura will work mainly with the surgical specialty societies in Aotearoa to develop a culturally safe curriculum. Amokura has begun to engage with stakeholders across the country including surgeons and trainees. Check out her webpage [Kura Consulting](#)

Pūhoro ki te hoe!

Pūhoro wānanga has pushed off in the Manawatū at the end of May. Our Kaiārahi Jonathan Koea was on board and supporting two student presentations from Dr Maia Tipene who is currently serving in the Army at Linton Military Base and Mikayla Kahi who is a Pūhoro graduate and T1 at Palmerston North Hospital and was keen to come along and encourage students contemplating a career in medicine. He mihi nui ki a kōrua!

Nau mai Liberty Koea (one of Jonathan's daughters) who has joined us this year as a kaiāwhina. Liberty has recently completed a bachelor's degree in film animation.

Over 80 local high school students attended three consecutive sessions and tried out our new laparoscopic trainers as well as the many suturing kits we have received from the SKILLS team at RACS.



Mihi whakatau, team intros Jonathan taking a back seat for the next generation.

Ka huri te kei o te waka ki Taranaki with Nigel Henderson, Awhina Meikle and Jaymee McNab-Hand taking up the hoe and there was a lively discussion among students and surgeons as well as keen interest in the activities. John Mutu-Grigg and Jamie Harvey will be in the engine room on the 30th June AUT Manukau campus, Tāmaki Makaurau to finish before the school holidays.



Nigel Henderson and students



Awhina Meikle with students

We have three more wānanga to attend on the 5th August in Whangārei with Maxine Ronald and Marinus Stowers. 7th August in Otautahi with Andrea Coleman and Nasya Thompson and 11th August in Whanganui with Nigel Henderson and Mairarangi Haimona. If you are keen to join one of the above wānanga let us know!

teraupoka@surgeons.org

RACSTA – Trainees Association

Cherelle Ormsby is one of the trainee representatives on both the Indigenous Health Committee and the Māori Health Advisory Group. Cherelle is also on the RACSTA committee. Cherelle is available to canvas any concerns or issues that may be occurring for any of the trainees. You can contact her cherelle.ormsby@gmail.com

Kaupapa Motuhake – Important dates for the year

Te Rau Poka will be part of the following hui

Te Oranga Wānanga-A-Tau 11-12 July, 2026

Te Rau Poka has partnered with Te Oranga Māori Medical Students Association and includes their affiliated rūpū TOKA (Te Oranga ki Akarana) and TOKO (Te Oranga Ki Otākou). We will continue to support their annual hui, kura reo and regional other events organized by Te Oranga. This year the wānanga a tau is being held **11-12 July in Rotorua** and the Kura Reo on **14-16 August in Te Waipounamu**. For more information on these hui please contact teoranga.exec@gmail.com

Te Rau Poka Hui-A-Tau 21-22 August, 2026

The Te Rau Poka hui a tau will be held in **Auckland August 21-22nd** at Te Mānukanuka o Hoturoa Marae near the Auckland Airport. Accommodation is provided at the marae. Please register by filling out the form. [Te Rau Poka Hui-a-tau, 21-23 August, 2026 – Fill out form](#). Email teraupoka@surgeons.org for any enquiries.

There will be time for whakawhanaungatanga, an inspirational speaker, a Tetra Mapping session, consultation with the Whakaruruhau/Cultural Safety project team and lots of good kai and celebration. Its a one day hui with optional overnight stay.

This hui also qualifies for CPD - 7 points for a whole day event. If you require assistance to attend, a limited number of travel grants will be available for students so get in quick. Registrations will close July 30th.

Te ORA Hui-a-Tau 3-6 September, 2026

RACS is a sponsor of Te ORA hui-a-tau in **Auckland 3-6 September** at Waipapa Marae, Waipapa Taumata Rau/University of Auckland. Te Rau Poka team will be manning the stand for the duration of the hui. If you are planning to attend the hui and would like to support us by demonstrating some surgical techniques and talking to the medical students we would be very grateful. The Shark Tank is highly competitive so we are looking for some spoken word enthusiasts this year!

Rangahau – Research Update

Summer Research Update.

Amy Waters was the recipient of the 2025 Raumati Research Grant. Amy worked on the feasibility trial looking at microvascular anastomosis in head and neck free flap surgery using optical coherence tomography.

The team received provisional approval for the study in February 2026. They have had the head of department of ENT and interventional cardiology at Auckland City hospital sign off on locality approval. Next steps will be working on receiving formal ethics approval and locality approval from Auckland City Hospital. Since this update, the ethics was approved and the project is underway. Congratulations to Amy and her research team.

There will be two summer research grants offered at the end of the year. Please keep an eye out for the Expressions of Interest in the Koanga/Spring issue of Kawerongo.

Te Huarahi Roa- The long road.

Congratulation to Nasya Thompson's whose manuscript has been published in the ANZ Journal of Surgery. Nasya presented her findings at the ASC in Perth where she also presented on her doctoral research. Nasya was also the recipient of an ASC Indigenous Scholarship. [ANZ Journal of Surgery - 2026 - Thompson - Te Huarahi Roa The Long Road.pdf](#)

Whakapiri mai – Join the Academy!

Tēnei au te hōkai nei taku tapuwae

Te Rau Poka refers to the pursuit of excellence in surgery but in a holistic sense, encompassing all aspects of one's being, such as physical, mental, spiritual, and cultural.

It represents a core value in Māori culture, which emphasises the importance of striving for excellence and maintaining a balanced way of life. This concept can be understood through the pūrākau (legend) of the acquisition of knowledge by Tāne Nui A Rangi.

Te Rau Poka provides support and guidance to Māori interested in surgical careers, creating a pipeline of tauira (students) from secondary school onwards to surgical leadership roles. There are 62 students currently registered with Te Rau Poka.

To join the Academy, please scan the QR code below and fill out the form. To enter the prize draw put HOTOKE in the comments section. The prize is a t-shirt with the new tohu of the academy.

To meet the team, check out our webpage on [Te Rau Poka – Māori Surgical Academy | RACS](#). For any questions please contact us at teraupoka@surgeons.org

