



Te Rau Poka

Kawerongo

KOANGA / Spring

Mahuru/September 2026

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Mihimihi – Kaiārahi update

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa

Welcome to the spring newsletter. This month is busy with Te Ora Hui-a-Tau in Tamaki on September 4-6. This is the 30th anniversary of the first Hui-a-Tau – also held in Tamaki. This will be a great meeting and a chance for whanaungatanga, Kotahitanga, pūkengatanga and manaakitanga. RACS and Te Rau Poka will have a booth at the Hui-a-Tau – please come by and spend some time with us.

Also, this month is Māori Language Week between 14-21 September. The theme is Ake, Ake, Ake – a forever language. The resurgence in Te Reo Māori is one of the most exciting things currently in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Wānanga are heavily subscribed and Kaiako are in demand. For those who already have the reo – treasure it and use it every day. For those who don't yet have it – start the journey it will change your life.

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. We no longer have a dedicated counsellor but there are services offered through the College.

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

New premises for Aotearoa New Zealand office.

Te Whare Piki Ora O Māhutonga has a new whare in Wellington. We are located on the 18th floor of the Majestic Tower 100 Willis Street. Wellington. We are now closer to the other medical colleges; the Medical Council and Te ORA have an office nearby.

The office is open from 8.30am until 5pm Monday to Friday. You are welcome to pop in for a coffee, take in the views of the magnificent Te Whanganui a Tara. You may also use our facilities as a surgeon or trainee. To book a meeting room email College.NZ@surgeons.org.

Whakanuia! Ngakau Ora Award

Whakanuia e te Rangatira! We celebrate Professor Jonathan Koea who was recognised by his peers at Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa-Māori Medical Practitioners Association's 30th annual conference in Auckland with the prestigious Paratene Ngata 'Ngakau Ora' award.

This award is given in Dr Pat Ngata's memory to one who has shown outstanding concern for the wellbeing of individual members. The award was presented by members of Dr Ngata's whānau including his widow who spoke poignantly about her husband- a teacher and mentor to many Māori doctors including Jonathan.

Through his role of Kaiārahi/ Director of Te Rau Poka surgical academy, Jonathan has for the past six years lead the programme and provided support for a growing number of trainees and students under his tutelage. He is also the first Māori Professor of Surgery and gave his inaugural lecture in 2024 at the University.



Jonathan on the night with proud members of his immediate and extended whānau.

In addition to his many commitments, Jonathan has been learning te reo Māori for the past three years and this included attending several wānanga each year at Urenui Pā. Jonathan also spoke at Tā Maui Pomare Day in Waitara and from there invited to speak at the first anniversary of Kuini Ngā Wai Hono I Te Pō at the Koroneihana in Ngaruawahia. His dedication to his learning journey is eloquently stated in the whakatauki (proverbial saying) from Ngāti Mutunga:

Kia ū ki te Marae, mā te Marae ka kīa koe he Tangata.

Hold fast to the marae, for it is the marae that makes you stand tall and be somebody.

Kaupapa Motuhake - Upcoming events.

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

Give us a hand on Te Rau Poka stand!

The highlight of our year is always Te ORA hui ā tau. This year is the 30th anniversary of Te ORA (Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa) and Te Rau Poka will be there. The hui will take place 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 let us know. The Shark Tank is highly competitive so we are looking for some spoken word enthusiasts this year! We have Te Rau Poka tshirts for all volunteers. Let us know if you have a bit of time to help out and your shirt size from extra small to 2XL. Expressions of interest close September 30. Email teraupoka@surgeons.org

PRIDOC- Taiwan – 30 Nov- 4 Dec 2026

Have you had an abstract to present accepted?

The Pacific Rim Indigenous Doctors are meeting this year in Taiwan. Te Rau Poka will support two trainees or early career surgeons who have a successful abstract accepted to present at the conference. \$3,000 per person. Send us an email with a copy of your acceptance letter for consideration Expressions of interest close September 30.

Email teraupoka@surgeons.org.

RACSTA – Trainees Association

Have a chat to the RACSTA rep

Cherelle Ormsby is one of the trainee representatives on both the Indigenous Health Committee and the Māori Health Advisory Group. Cherelle is also a member of 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

Rangahau – Research Update

Rangahau Raumati- Summer Research Award Open!

The Summer Research Award is open now! Get your applications in before October 30th. We will announce the award recipients in early November. There are two prizes of \$5000 each up for grabs this year. Please fill out the form and send us a recent photo and biography. [Te Rau Poka - Rangahau Raumati- Summer research prize 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Previous applicants may reapply for a different project. All projects must have ethics approval and supply a reference letter from one of the senior investigators on the project.

You must be a member of Te Rau Poka Academy to be eligible to apply. Please join using the QR code at the end of the newsletter.

Meet Dr Amy Waters who was the recipient of the 2025 Raumati Research Grant.



Tēnā koutou,
Ko Whakatere te maunga
Ko Waima te awa
Ko Hokianga te moana
Ko Ngātokimatawhaorua te waka
Ko Tūhirangi te marae
Ko Ngāpuhi te iwi
Ko Te Mahurehure te hapū
Ko Amy taku ingoa

I grew up in Tāmaki Makaurau and graduated from the University of Auckland in 2024 with an MBChB. I am currently a 2nd year house officer working in Tāmaki Makaurau. I have a particular interest in ENT and medical innovation, with a passion for exploring how new ideas and technologies can improve patient care. I am looking forward to presenting my research at the ORL2026 conference in Auckland this October.

Cultural Safety Project

The Aotearoa New Zealand Cultural Safety Project kicked off in May. Project Lead, Amokura Panoho has begun to engage with stakeholders in Wellington and will be available to speak to Fellows and Trainees at the Te ORA hui a tau in Tāmaki Makaurau in early September. The project is funded by the Foundation for Surgery for two years.

The Council of Medical Colleges hosted the fourth annual Cultural Safety Day at Wharewaka Convention Centre in Te Whanganui a Tara. The day was well attended by RACS representatives including Aotearoa NZ General Manager Calum Barrett. Surgical Advisor Sarah Rennie and AONZ National committee chair Sharon English and RACS counsellor Ros Pochin as well as Kaiwhakarite Ruth Herd.

A highlight of the hui was the presentation by Dr David Tipene Leach who spoke about cultural loading and how it impacts Māori doctors. David reminded participants that there is still a lot of work to do in the cultural safety space, and this is important work that cannot be done by Māori alone.

We also had a progress report from the Council about how the Colleges are doing in implementing cultural safety in their programmes and Colleges. The College of Physicians Equity Lead Nicky McMurdy and Teremoana Porter shared their journey to develop an Indigenous curriculum for their trainees.

The Ministry of Health Digital data team presented their data showing that many New Zealand trained doctors are heading overseas. There is an urgent need for more medical graduates across all the specialties. The Medical Council of New Zealand has just released its Medical Workforce Survey 2026 [The New Zealand Medical Workforce in 2026](#)

There are currently 1125 Māori medical doctors comprising 5.76% of the workforce. Fifty percent of the Māori workforce are 34 years or younger. The report also shows proportions of doctors by work types and gender.

Pūhoro ki te hoe!

Te Rau Poka was part of six Pūhoro wānanga this year. This year we had amazing support from over 15 surgeons, trainees and medical students, first year doctors, one of whom was a Pūhoro attendee a decade ago. The wānanga were held in Whangārei, Tāmaki Makaurau, Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū and Ōtautahi. 350 year 11 and 12 high school students across the country attended sessions and tried out our new laparoscopic trainers as well as the many suturing kits we have received from the SKILLS team at RACS.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou ngā Kaikōrero – huge thanks to the presenters this year: Jonathan Koea, Maia Tipene and Mikayla Kahi in Manawatū. Nigel Henderson, Awhina Meikle and Jamie McNab-Hand in Taranaki; John Mutu-Grigg and Jamie Harvey in Tamaki Makaurau. Maxine Ronald, Rhys Martin and Whiti Hori in Whangareī; Andrea Cross and Nasya Thompson in Ōtautahi and Nigel Henderson and Mairarangi Haimona in Whanganui. Thanks also to MedTronic representative Gillian who came along to the Whangārei event.

At the Whangareī wānanga with Rhys Martin and Maxine Ronald





Dr Nasya Thompson in Ōtautahi.



Dr Jamie Harvey in Tāmaki Makaurau



Dr John Mutu-Grigg in Tāmaki Makaurau



Taranaki wānanga underway

Feedback from students:

The feedback from students across the country was similar. We were told by Pūhoro kaimahi that the Surgeons are the favourites because we bring equipment for the students to try their hand at surgical skills and have fun at the same time. This year the merchandise included bouncy stress balls the students had to earn by answering questions from the presenters. Here are some of their comments:

“Great, I loved using the machines to cut and open the lollies. The stitching was also extremely fun.”

“My highlight was the surgical machine because I succeeded in getting the lolly out of the wrapper.”

“I got to use different medical tools and got to sew a cut. I enjoyed this because I want to become a surgeon in the future.”

“It was really interesting, my favourite activity during the session was sewing together the fake skin with needles.”

"I got to try suturing up a cut wound which was cool."

"This was my favourite because there were a lot of interactive things to do."

"It was really fun doing the practicals and sutures and laparoscopic surgery."

"I enjoyed it because I got to experience how hard it was to be a surgeon."

"This was my favourite! I loved learning how to do stitches and learning about the pathways into surgery."

"We all got a turn to see what it's like being a surgeon."

"Fun doing the surgery sewing and learning more about a surgeon's life and what they do."

“I have gained confidence now so thank you for everything you guys provide for me.”

"I loved the teachers speaking about their backstory on how and why they got to be a surgeon."

Many thanks to Pūhoro national coordinator Adele Vukula, Regional coordinators Toni Floyd and Samantha Rangihuna - Bell for the amazing mahi you do to get everything ready for our presenters. We look forward to another season in 2027.

Whakapiri mai – Join the Academy!

Tēnei te tira hou e haere mai nei

The new generation rises

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.

To join the Academy, please scan the QR code below and fill out the form. To enter the prize draw put KOANGA 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](#). If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining the academy, please contact us at teraupoka@surgeons.org