



Royal Australasian

College of Surgeons



Stronger together: a united future for surgery

Strategic plan

2025 - 2027

Foreword

Stewardship in a time of change

Surgery depends on trust — from patients, communities, governments, and the systems in which we operate. Driven by our values of service, integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) exists to protect that trust by setting and upholding the highest standards of surgical education, training, professionalism, and care across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

As we approach our centenary year, this strategy reflects the environment we are operating in today. This is shaped by system pressure, significant regulatory reform, and changing expectations of professional institutions. It reaffirms RACS' core purpose and sets a clear direction for how we continue to honour our social contract, unify the profession, operate with discipline and integrity, and strengthen the value we deliver to you, our members and stakeholders.

RACS is a profession-led organisation. Our impact depends on the collective contribution of surgeons who teach, lead, and serve in the interests of patients and the community. We are stronger together. With a united focus on what matters most, we continue to be a trusted steward of surgical standards for the decades to come.



Owen Ung

President, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons



Stephanie Clota

CEO, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons





Who we are

The accredited authority for surgery

Established in 1927, RACS is the accredited authority for surgical standards, education, and advocacy in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

RACS is accredited by the Australian Medical Council and the Medical Council of New Zealand (Te Kaunihera Rata O Aotearoa) to deliver surgical education and training across nine surgical specialties. This accreditation underpins Fellowship and the FRACS post-nominal, providing independence in standard-setting, regulatory resilience, and a single, trusted voice for surgery.

We are a member-led, profession-governed organisation, representing surgeons across all career stages. Through shared services delivered at scale—including accreditation and compliance systems, governance frameworks, professional standards, the RACS Library, Foundation scholarships, wellbeing programs, and coordinated advocacy—RACS supports the profession while protecting the public interest.

RACS is the largest procedural specialist medical college in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and a respected voice during a period of significant health system pressure and reform.

FRACS

One shared standard

100 years

Trust and authority in 2027

Why we exist

Protecting the social contract of surgery

Trust is earned through standards, accountability, and service to the community.

The community grants the profession trust, autonomy, and status. In return, surgeons commit to the highest standards of competence, ethics, and care, and to continuously improving how surgery is delivered.

RACS exists to hold and honour that contract.

We strive to serve both our profession and our communities. After all, when RACS is strong, standards are trusted. When standards are trusted, the community is safer.

We do this by:

Standards

Setting and assuring standards of surgical education and practice

Support

Supporting surgeons across their entire professional journey

Advocacy

Advocating for safe, equitable, and sustainable surgical systems

Unity

Unifying the profession to speak with clarity and credibility

9

Surgical specialities

10,000+

Fellows, Trainees and SIMGs





Unity is vital.

Regulatory reform, system pressure, and rising expectations demand coherence.

Headwinds

The environment in which surgery operates is becoming more complex and demanding.

Healthcare systems are under sustained pressure from workforce shortages, rising costs, and growing demand. Regulatory scrutiny is increasing, and expectations of professional bodies are changing. Members rightly expect relevance, transparency, and value, while governments and the community expect accountability and leadership.

At the same time, fragmentation across specialties, jurisdictions, and pathways threatens the entire healthcare sector. The risk of weakening standards, diluting influence, and eroding trust is real.

Ignoring these realities would place our profession and our patients at risk.

Tailwinds

RACS enters this period with significant strengths.

FRACS remains the bi-nationally and internationally recognised benchmark for surgical training and professionalism. Governments and regulators continue to seek RACS' advice. Surgeons across specialties remain deeply committed to education, mentorship, and service. And there is increasing recognition that unity, not duplication, delivers better outcomes for the profession and the community.

As we look to our next century, the opportunity is for renewal with purpose: to strengthen what only RACS can do, while evolving how it is delivered.

Our 2028 ambition

A unified future
for surgery:
One profession.
One standard.
One trusted voice.

Grounded in our purpose—empowering our members to advance surgical excellence—and guided by our vision of advancing surgery and embracing innovation, RACS will, by 2028, remain a unified and future-ready College.

We continue to be a trusted organisation that members are proud of, and that communities and governments depend on to safeguard surgical care.

To strengthen these foundations further we will deliver on six key objectives. Built from our strategic pillars, each reinforces the others and focuses RACS on what matters most.



1. Member Value

Strengthen the trust, confidence and ongoing commitment from our members.



2. Social Contract

Advance RACS' surgical social impact to drive meaningful change and improve patient outcomes.



3. Surgical Unity

Drive surgical competence and standards through contemporary education, assessment and advocacy.



4. Financial Sustainability

Drive long term financial sustainability and resilience.



5. People and Leadership

Build a thriving culture and critical leadership capabilities.



6. Operational Excellence

Operate with focus, efficiency, and integrity.

Our strategic pillars

Building trust at scale

We will deliver on six key priorities. Each reinforces the others and focuses RACS on what matters most.

1. Member Value

Strengthen the trust, confidence and ongoing commitment from our members.

RACS will deliver clear, meaningful value to members at every stage of their career. We will refine our member value proposition with a focus on the value delivered back to individual members. We will continue to strengthen engagement, improve communication, and ensure our systems are fair, transparent, and practical in operation. The trust of our members is not assumed—it is earned through relevance, clarity, and delivery.

2. Social Contract

Advance RACS' surgical social impact to drive meaningful change and improve patient outcomes.

RACS will be explicit about its responsibility to the community. We will work with national governments and jurisdictions to ensure the surgical workforce pipeline is aligned with the needs of the communities we serve. We will lead on issues of equity, workforce sustainability, patient safety and access to care. Importantly, we will measure our impact. After all, maintaining the profession's social licence to self-regulate depends on visible, credible outcomes.

3. Surgical Unity

Drive surgical competence and standards through contemporary education, assessment and advocacy.

RACS does not replace specialty societies. But as the only institution with scale and widely recognised accreditation, we are uniquely positioned to connect and amplify them. We are developing our Surgical Pathway Strategy with a focus on supporting the next generation of surgeons to meet the demands of the future. Through clear partnership, shared roadmaps, and coordinated advocacy, RACS will reduce duplication, protect standards, and present a coherent voice to governments and regulators.

4. Financial Sustainability

Drive long term financial sustainability and resilience.

RACS will operate with financial discipline, transparency, and foresight. We will reinvigorate our focus on procurement, seeking opportunities to find value for our members, Trainees and SIMGs across all our activities. Sustainable finances protect the College's independence, enable investment in what matters most, and ensure core mission activities are resilient to external shocks.

5. People and Leadership

Build a thriving culture and critical leadership capabilities.

RACS will invest in leadership capability across Fellows, volunteers, and staff. We are developing our capability framework to support leadership assessment, development and planning. We will set clear expectations, strengthen succession, and foster a culture of service, professionalism, and accountability. Leadership is not positional; it is practiced.

6. Operational Excellence

Operate with focus, efficiency, and integrity.

RACS will simplify how it works, improve decision-making, and make better use of data and technology. We will deliver a new IT operating model with cost savings and focus on uplift of core benefits for the College. Operational excellence enables strategy to be delivered consistently, transparently, and at scale for our members, partners, and the community.

**This strategy is not about
doing more.**

**It is about doing what
matters well, and together.**

As RACS moves into its centenary year, it is recommitting to its core role: setting standards, supporting surgeons, and serving the community. By strengthening unity, protecting independence, and focusing on delivery, the College will remain a trusted steward of surgery for the decades ahead.

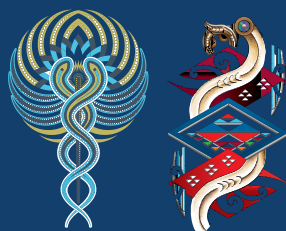


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