



**Philippa Mercer
(Chair)**

FROM THE CHAIR

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Thank you and goodbye

This is my final article before handing over to the new Executive for the Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee (AoNZNC).

The new Chair is Andrew MacCormick. Andrew has been involved in AoNZNC for some years as he was initially the Younger Fellow Representative then was voted onto the Committee as a member. For the last two years he has been the Deputy Chair.

Andrew is an Associate Professor at the University of Auckland, based at Middlemore, and works as a General Surgeon with special interests in upper gastrointestinal and bariatric surgery. Beyond surgery, he has been very active in sustainability in healthcare, developing systems for reducing waste from hospitals and looking after the environment. I have observed he has excellent skills when meeting politicians and representatives from the Health Ministry.

Murali Mahadevan is an Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgeon who is also based at Middlemore. He has been our Treasurer for the last two years. At committee meetings his comments are always well thought-out and expressed. Murali has now been elected to Deputy Chair and has started attending extra meetings and seminars to extend his involvement and look in more depth into our national issues.

Ros Pochin, a General Surgeon from Nelson, takes on the role of Treasurer. Ros's special interests in surgery are breast, endocrine surgery and trauma. She is the Convenor for our Queenstown conference Surgery 2022: Care in Crisis which is on 1-2 September. She is very

active in areas of education for the College and on Faculty for skills courses.

Andrew, Murali and Ros will lead AoNZNC well, along with the other voted members, specialty representatives, AoNZ Councillors and our co-opted members.



Andrew MacCormick.

In my time on the Committee I have been impressed with the lay representatives who provide their time and expertise freely. They provide balance, wise opinions and humour where appropriate.

AoNZNC has had John Simpson, Allan Panting, Richard Lander and for the last 18 months Sarah Rennie and Spencer Beasley as Surgical Advisors. Concerns from Trainees, Fellows and sometimes the public are frequently directed to the Surgical Advisors. A number of the complaints are about bullying or inappropriate behaviour. Spencer, in particular, has been very involved in the workforce crisis in Paediatric Surgery in Wellington and the lower North Island. The Surgical Advisors also write responses to the many documents to which AoNZNC is asked to review.

The Aotearoa New Zealand office is run by Justine Peterson with the assistance of a very capable staff. Without her knowledge of the system, RACS and her contacts we would struggle. Unfortunately the office

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FROM THE CHAIR (continued)

is short staffed and this has meant very long hours for Justine and her team. The COVID-19 years have especially added responsibilities, particularly with the increased number of AoNZ-based examinations; the vast increase in the number of Specialist International Medical Graduates seeking vocational registration in one of the nine surgical scopes; and the workload from course cancellations.

Rachelle Love is a highly valued member on our Committee. She is an elected member and also the representative of the Māori Health Advisory Group (MHAG). She has listened to our Committee's extensive discussions on topics such as the name change to include Aotearoa New Zealand and the policy on koha, and always provided well-timed and thought-out comments. Recently a few responses to RACS and AoNZNC were frankly racist. Rachelle reminded the Committee that she and other Māori students and doctors have been subjected to these comments for years. Thank you Rachelle for your commitment to the AoNZNC.

You remind us of our privilege and reinforce the Committee's understanding and commitment to equity.

A highlight of the last two years was having an Aotearoa New Zealand convocation at Te Papa in Wellington. The children and families of those who convocated were very proud.

The lows include COVID-19 but the response and hard work of the nurses, doctors and the health system to keep going continues to impress me.

Workforce planning and equity of our health system continue to be top issues. From 1 July, our new health system was introduced. As it continues taking shape over the coming months and years, I'm sure it will provide an ongoing discussion point for the Committee.

Thank you for all your support throughout my two years as Chair of your Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee.

Philippa

Key Dates

12 July: Registrations close for training course Clinical Decision Making (online)

27-28 August: New Zealand Association of General Surgeons conference (Wellington)

1-2 September: Surgery 2022: Care in a Crisis (Queenstown/ online)

2 September: Louis Barnett Prize - finalist presentations @ Surgery 2022 (Queenstown/ online)

2 September: AoNZNC meeting

2 September: Deadline for contributions for the next edition of Cutting Edge

14 September: In person training course Difficult Conversations with Underperforming Trainees (8:30am-4:30pm, Auckland)

Friday 2 December: AoNZNC meeting

Otago Medical School students take home Essential Surgical Skills Kits

Congratulations to the winners of the RACS raffle, held at the New Zealand Medical Students' Association (NZMSA) conference in Christchurch on 11-12 June.

Sina Hosseini is a sixth-year student from Otago Medical School based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

Lili Campbell-Tie, also from Otago Medical School, is in her second year and lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

We hope they get some use out of their Essential Surgical Skills Kits and wish them all the best for the remainder of their studies.



Sina Hosseini and Lili Campbell-Tie.

REGISTER NOW

SURGERY 2022 - Care in a Crisis

THURSDAY 1 & FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2022

Crowne Plaza, Queenstown



Registration is open so don't miss the chance to connect with colleagues and gain new insights from our exciting lineup of speakers.

This year's theme is *Care in a Crisis* and explores the many issues and perspectives around the critically unwell patient.

Session topics include finding empathy in a crisis, how to keep focused, the Māori attitude to death, and organ donation from a family's perspective.

Hear from renowned microbiologist Dr Siouxsie Wiles, RACS Fellows Dr Andrew Connolly and Associate Professor Jonathan Koea, and Amy Ng, a bilateral lung transplant recipient.



Microbiologist and science commentator Dr Siouxsie Wiles



Chief Medical Officer for Counties Manukau Dr Andrew Connolly

Find the full programme:

<https://www.surgeons.org/about-racs/racs-offices/Aotearoa-New-Zealand/new-zealand-activities#Surgery%202022>

There will also be presentations from this year's finalists of the Louis Barnett Prize, which recognises advanced surgical academic research from Trainees and younger Fellows.

Register:

<https://surgeons.eventsair.com/surgery22/surgery2022>.

Find out more:

<https://www.surgeons.org/about-racs/racs-offices/Aotearoa-New-Zealand/new-zealand-activities#Surgery%202022>

Join us in Queenstown or take part remotely.

- Surgery 2022 – Care in a Crisis •
- Thursday 1 September to Friday 2 September •
- Queenstown / Online •

From the Edge

A word from our Surgical Advisors Drs Sarah Rennie and Spencer Beasley

Thanks to everyone who reported their CPD by the due date, and to those who paid their RACS subs on time. You make the lives of the RACS team much easier and free up their time and energy to do the things that make the biggest difference, including advocacy and education.

We encourage all Fellows to keep up to date with CPD reporting. Not only does it determine your ability to hold an Annual Practising Certificate, but it is a legal obligation.

Paying your RACS subscription is equally important. Being a RACS Fellow makes it easier to connect and collaborate with your peers and shows your commitment to ongoing professional development. It also helps us as a College to advocate on your behalf and ensure your voice is heard.

Consent for student involvement in sensitive examinations

The days of asking a medical student to do a per rectum (PR) on an anaesthetised patient so they can feel a rectal cancer or similar when the patient has not given consent are gone. Patient autonomy and consent are vital, and there are codes of ethics to ensure patients' rights are protected.

A recent publication by *Bhoopatkar et al* (NZ Medical Journal (online), 20 May 2022) has again shown that gaining consent for involvement of medical students in sensitive examinations is not always happening.

Ultimately, patients have the right to be told when it is proposed that they will be participating in teaching, and it is the Senior Medical Officer's responsibility to ensure informed consent is gained. Where a patient will be awake during the examination, this needs to occur with no suggestion of coercion, i.e., without the student in the room. It is recommended that this discussion is documented in the patient's notes. Where a patient will be under anaesthesia, it is both an ethical and legal requirement for consent for students' involvement in sensitive examinations to be in writing.

Concerningly, the research paper reported some students perform sensitive exams without patient consent due to pressure from their senior or due to indifference. The Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) has called for "clear ethical leadership...to embed a culture of vigilance around informed consent."

This requires positive and ethical role modelling. Students must feel empowered to question any examination if a patient has not given informed consent."

We encourage every RACS Fellow to reflect on what they do when they are facilitating learning of sensitive examinations by medical students.

Accurate reporting of investigation findings

The HDC has been in contact with the College about a case of persistent rectal bleeding in a patient with a rectal cancer that sadly was missed. Details of the case can be found on the HDC website: <https://www.hdc.org.nz/decisions/search-decisions/2022/19hdc02143/>.

The patient, in her sixties, had been undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma when she presented to the Emergency Department (ED) with rectal bleeding and was admitted to haematology. During the admission it was noted she had anaemia and thrombocytopenia requiring a blood transfusion and tranexamic acid.

The patient was assessed by the surgical registrar who did a PR and rigid sigmoidoscopy. The presence of blood and an external haemorrhoid was documented.

The patient's symptoms persisted, and she was seen two-and-a-half months later in a haematology clinic and referred for a colonoscopy, which was subsequently declined. The referral inaccurately stated her rigid sigmoidoscopy was normal.

She subsequently returned to the ED with further bleeding and again another normal PR was documented.

The following day, the patient's GP, whose PR examination revealed an irregular mass, made an urgent referral to a private colorectal surgeon who confirmed the presence of a rectal mass.

The HDC urges surgeons and surgical trainees to remember the importance of an adequate rectal examination and consider learning opportunities (with patient consent!) to ensure junior staff experience and understand what constitutes a good rectal examination. The report also emphasises the importance of taking a full history of a patient's presenting complaint and relevant family history, and to thoroughly investigate if there are multiple admissions with the same issue.



Sarah Rennie and Spencer Beasley, Surgical Advisors (Aotearoa New Zealand)

RACS ASC 2022



Above left: RACS Surgical Research Award recipient Professor Frank Frizelle with (L-R) Imad Aljanabi, Philippa Mercer, Bridget Watson and Justin Roake.

Above right: Convocating Fellows (L-R), Laila Sheikh, Rebecca Shine, Stephanie Manning, Bridget Watson, Yukai Lim.

Left: Indigenous Health Scholars with (on L) former Chair of the Indigenous Health Committee Kelvin Kong and Jennifer Spurgeon from sponsors Johnson & Johnson. Aotearoa New Zealand scholars Toriana Murray, Nasya Thompson, Nikky Fraser and Lincoln Nicholls are included.

Right: Ros Pochin and new Fellow Alistair Escott.

Environmental sustainability in surgery

How concerned are you about climate change and the impact surgical practices have on the issue? The Environmental Sustainability in Surgical Practice Working Party would love to hear your thoughts.

Take the survey and tell us what you are doing to reduce your carbon footprint and what role you feel RACS should play on this issue, from advocacy to education.

Spend five minutes and take the survey now: <https://biredcap.mh.org.au/surveys/?s=JCKYA4PP3F9DA7DN>

If you're looking for ways to be more environmentally sustainable at work, Doctors for the Environment Australia is working on some guidelines. The Green College Guidelines offer Medical Colleges practical and affordable ideas to save energy and water, and reduce waste. Once they have been finalised we will circulate the document.



Binational Fellowship Examinations a double reason to celebrate

Congratulations to all successful Aotearoa New Zealand-based Trainees in May's exams.

The Fellowship Examinations (FEX) were held in Christchurch and Melbourne. The Melbourne exams were the first to include examiners and candidates from both Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia since 2019. It was also the first time since COVID-19 that, at the FEX in Christchurch, the Function for Successful Candidates and the Court Dinner for examiners could be held.

Besides running smoothly and returning a strong pass-rate, the chance to run these events as normal brought an extra level of excitement.

Congratulations go to:

General Surgery

Benjamin Black	James Crichton
Kirsten De Buriel	Ashok Gunawardene
Lucy Hinton	Anna Lam
Helena Lee	Howe Mao
Hwa Ian Ong	Jeffrey Tan

Orthopaedic Surgery

Zaid Bahho	Matthew Fisk
Oliver Johnson	Chuan Kong Koh
Thomas Kuperus	John Mortimer
Tadeusz Piszal	Saesol Shin

Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery

Depak Patel

Paediatric Surgery

Lucy Goddard	Shareena Lala
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Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Charlotte Blau	Hyok Jun Kwon
Sarah Shugg	

Urology

Joshua Silverman

Vascular Surgery

Chi Ho Ricky Kwok



Successful Orthopaedic surgery candidates with examiners in Christchurch.



Depak Patel with Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery examiners in Melbourne.



Examiners for the FEX in Christchurch.



Above left: Shareena Lala with Paediatric Surgery examiners in Melbourne.
Above right: Chi Ho Ricky Kwok with Vascular Surgery examiners in Melbourne.
Left: Successful General Surgery candidates with family members in Christchurch.

Upcoming Training Courses

Difficult Conversations with Underperforming Trainees

In person: Wednesday 14 September 2022, 8:30am-4:30pm, Cliftons, Auckland

This course provides supervisors with a framework to prepare, conduct and follow up on difficult conversations with underperforming trainees in a procedurally fair manner. It builds on skills learnt in the Foundation Skills for Surgical Education (FSSE) course and is interactive, including group activities and role play.

Find out more and register: <https://www.surgeons.org/Education/professional-development/all-professional-development-activities/difficult-conversations-with-underperforming-trainees/registration-schedule-and-fees>

Note, this course was originally due to run on Thursday 28 July in Wellington.

Clinical Decision Making

Online only: A three-week training course consisting of three eLearning modules and an interactive webinar on Wednesday 27 July 2022, 10:30am-12pm (NZST)

This four-hour course provides a roadmap for forming sound clinical decisions and can also be used as a guide for the supervisor dealing with a struggling trainee or as a self-improvement exercise.

Registration closes Tuesday 12 July 2022.

Find out more and register: <https://www.surgeons.org/Education/professional-development/all-professional-development-activities/clinical-decision-making/registration-schedule-and-fees>



Meet the team

Following elections in March, there is a new leadership line up for the Aotearoa NZ National Committee. From 1 July 2022, the Committee includes:

Elected members

Associate Professor Andrew MacCormick
Associate Professor Murali Mahadevan
Dr Rosalynd Pochin
Dr Gary Duncan
Dr Sharon English
Dr Simon John
Dr Rachelle Love
Dr Philippa Mercer
Dr Morgan Pokorny
Dr Subhaschandra Shetty

Chair
Deputy Chair
Treasurer

General Surgery
Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
General Surgery
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
Urology
Neurosurgery
Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
General Surgery
Urology
Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery

Specialty Representative members

Professor Sean Galvin
Dr Rowan French
Dr Suzanne Jackson
Dr Peter Devane
Dr Zahoor Ahmad
Dr Alison Scott
Dr Christopher Adams
Dr Leanne Shaw
Dr Janaka Kesara Wickremesekera

Cardiothoracic Surgery
General Surgery
Neurosurgery
Orthopaedic Surgery
Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
Paediatric Surgery
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
Urology
Vascular Surgery

Co-opted members

Ms Heather Ash
Dr Nigel Willis
Dr Bridget Watson
Dr Ella Nicolas

Expert Community Advisor
New Zealand Censor
Younger Fellows Representative
RACSTA Representative

Ex-Officio members

Ms Souella Cumming
Professor Andrew G Hill
Dr Nicola Hill
Dr Sharon Jay
Dr Sally Langley
Dr Philip Morreau
Dr Maxine Ronald

Expert Community Advisor
General Surgery
Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
RACSTA Chair
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
Paediatric Surgery
General Surgery

There is some movement in the RACS Aotearoa New Zealand (AoNZ) office too.

Please welcome our new communications specialist, **Diana Blake**. Diana promotes the work of RACS in Aotearoa New Zealand as well as bringing to light those good news stories that elevate surgery as a profession and recognise the amazing work our members do on this side of the Tasman.

Danielle Cochran has also joined the team, on a temporary contract for a minimum of four months. Danielle will be dividing her time between Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) applications and doing general administration for the AoNZ office.

After 12 years, our Administrator/ Receptionist **Andrea Lobo** has decided to move on to spend more time with her football-mad family. Andrea goes far and beyond

what her job title suggests, picking up tasks as and when needed to support the team in getting the work done. All the very best Andrea.

We were sad to say goodbye to Project Officer **Rachel Rodriguez**. After 18 months with us, Rachel returned home to her native New York before she continues to London to start a new adventure. We'd like to thank Rachel for all she has done for the team, including supporting exams and the planning the Annual Surgeons Meeting. We wish her well for her travels.

Leanne Wagner, Programme Coordinator (AoNZ Skills Courses), has also sadly left us. Leanne started with RACS last year. Over that time she proved herself a valuable asset and transitioned from a temporary role into a permanent position running skills training. Leanne will be missed.

Don't forget the rest of the team:

Justine Peterson	Aotearoa New Zealand Manager
Raji Divekar	Senior Accountant
Celia Stanyon	Executive Officer: SIMGs (Aotearoa NZ) and Training
Gloria Aumaivao-Tasi	Executive Officer: Training (Aotearoa NZ)
Sheryll Hoera	Māori Health Project Officer



Highlights from the AoNZ National Committee

- Representatives of the National Committee met with Dr Andrew Connolly and other members of the newly established Planned Care Taskforce. Its broad purpose is to explore how Aotearoa New Zealand's public health system can catch up on all the delayed elective surgery and other planned care while also managing new referrals.
- Committee members also met with Vicktoria Blake, the newly appointed project lead for Health NZ's Climate Change Working Group. This is an important area to connect with in light of the College's interest in environmental sustainability in surgical services.
- The number of applications received from Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) for vocational registration continues to grow strongly with almost twice the number as in the same period a year ago. While this is great news for diversity of the surgical workforce, it does put pressure on us to process the applications in time.
- Workforce shortages continue to be a major issue and we look forward to hearing more from the Workforce Taskforce, which will agree the key priority interventions for immediate workforce expansions. Nursing is the first area for focus.
- We are excited to be advertising for a Fellow to provide specialised knowledge to support and guide Maori Trainees, doctors interested in surgery and Younger Fellows. The Trainee Liaison Lead role will work to contribute to, guide and facilitate the development and implementation of surgical recruitment and retention initiatives in Aotearoa New Zealand. RACS is also looking to recruit for a similar position in Australia, to support First Nations Australians.

Top honours for surgical Fellow and RACS Councillor

Congratulations to Professor Francis (Frank) Frizelle and Ms Souella Cumming for being awarded Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in this year's Queen's Birthday and Platinum Jubilee Honours List.



Prof Frizelle is a RACS Fellow with a distinguished academic career which has led to breakthroughs in identifying the potential causes of bowel cancer.

In 2000 he became the first Professor of Colorectal Surgery in Aotearoa New Zealand. Frizelle went on to head the Academic Department of Surgery at the University of Otago, Christchurch in

2006, a position he held until 2019.

He is currently Professor of Colorectal Surgery at the University of Otago, Christchurch; and Colorectal Surgeon at Christchurch Hospital. He has been Editor in Chief of the New Zealand Medical Journal since 2002.

Learn more about Professor Frizelle's contribution to healthcare in New Zealand: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/honours/lists/qb2022-onzm#frizellefr>



Ms Cumming is the Aotearoa New Zealand Expert Community Advisor on the RACS Council and a partner at KPMG.

She has provided governance, risk management and internal audit advisory services across the public and private sectors for more than 30 years. She lent her expertise to the New

Zealand-hosted 2011 Rugby World Cup, and the 2015 Cricket and Under-20 FIFA World Cups, and supports governance in not-for-profits including Hohepa Homes Trust Audit and Risk Committee and the Special Olympics New Zealand Foundation.

Ms Cumming is committed to empowering women through her involvement with Zonta International, Women Corporate Directors in New Zealand and Global Women.

Read more about the contribution she has made to governance in New Zealand: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/honours/lists/qb2022-onzm#cummings>

MCNZ/RACS CPD requirement: Structured conversation with a peer

Introduced as part of the new Medical Council of New Zealand/ Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework, the intent of a structured conversation with a peer, colleague or employer is for you to reflect on your development needs; goals for learning; and professional activities and intentions for the next year. You are encouraged to use the information you have gained from different types of CPD to inform your conversation. It provides an opportunity to receive constructive feedback and share best practices.

It may also give you the opportunity to reflect on your current role, self-care and any health and wellbeing issues so you are able to adjust your practice, set performance targets, and consider longer-term career aspirations.

It is also an opportunity to review your practice to ensure you are providing culturally safe care for your patients, a culturally safe environment for your fellow team members and colleagues, and how you could improve health equity.

Your structured conversation can link into your learning plan as a cohesive review process. You can claim this activity under the performance review category 'Performance of Self'.

RACS does not require any documentation of the conversation although if you are selected for verification, you will need to confirm when you had the conversation and with whom.

For more information on the new Aotearoa New Zealand CPD framework, please visit the Medical Council of New Zealand - Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa website. (www.mcnz.org.nz)

For information on your new CPD requirements, please visit the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons - Te Whare Piki Ora o Māhutonga website.

Regional and Rural Health Strategy will be taking to the road

Good progress is being made on the RACS Aotearoa New Zealand Regional and Rural Health Equity Strategy, and dates for a roadshow to promote it are expected soon.

The Strategy ties in strongly with the RACS Strategic Plan which puts a strong emphasis on rural, remote and indigenous equity.

The focus currently is on how best to apply a Māori health lens to the Strategy. The Rural Health Equity Working Group is also advocating for an analysis of the barriers and incentives to surgeons taking up positions in regional settings and hopes to secure funding for this in the 2023 budget.

Meanwhile, there are promising developments on the other side of the Tasman as RACS signs a Memorandum of

Understanding with the Northern Territory Department of Health to support surgical services in the area, including a video coaching programme.



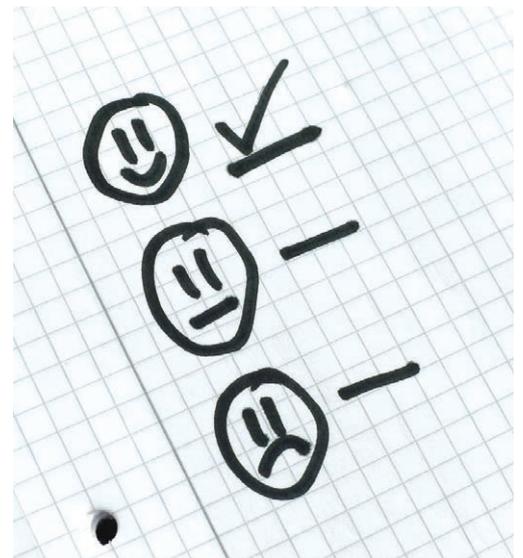
How would you like to receive your Cutting Edge?

Now we have a new communications specialist on board we thought it was time we took a look at how we deliver Cutting Edge to our members.

Most RACS communications, such as Fax Mentis, are sent in an enewsletter format, with short introductions which link through to longer stories. The advantage of this is you can skim through to get the detail on just those stories that most interest you. Some find this format more visually engaging too, with more pictures and fewer words.

Cutting Edge on the other hand is delivered in a PDF format which is also printed for those who prefer a hardcopy. This means you get all the information in one place, can print it easily, and for those who receive hardcopies, you can take it with you and dip in and out when time permits.

Is the current Cutting Edge format working for you? We'd love to hear your preference. Follow the link, answer just two questions and have your say: <https://forms.gle/3pSxQak9xvjBWoka7>



Expressions of Interest

The History, Heritage and Archives Committee are now taking expressions of interest to be a co-convenor for the 2024 ASC program in Christchurch. The selected Fellow will attend the Adelaide ASC in 2023 as the incoming convenor and organise the Christchurch ASC the following May, including planning the scientific program, inviting visitors, and organising the section dinner. Please email the committee secretariat, Molly Mckew (Molly.Mckew@surgeons.org) with a short email outlining any relevant experience, why you'd like to take on the role, and a short C.V.

Step back in time

It would seem that understanding the meaning of Australasia is not just an issue of recent times. A Circular sent to all Fellows in 1928 promoting the College's Annual Meeting in Canberra that year is headed "The College of Surgeons of Australasia Which includes New Zealand".

It also appears that Fellows from this country were, even then, keenly interested in the College. The circular also notes with some concern that "... New Zealand and Western Australia will, proportionately to their populations, be better represented than some of the States much nearer to Canberra. This must not be, ...".

We encourage letters to the Editor and any other contributions

**Please email these to:
college.nz@surgeons.org**

The deadline for Issue No. 83 is 2 September 2022

The Cutting Edge is published 4 times a year

VIEWES EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE COLLEGE

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

AOTEAROA NZ NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Chair

Andrew MacCormick

Deputy Chair

Murali Mahadevan

Honorary Treasurer

Ros Pochin

OFFICE

Level 3, PO Box 7451
8 Kent Terrace, Newtown
Wellington 6011, Wellington 6242
New Zealand

Tollfree (NZ only) 0800 787 469 / 0800 SURGNZ

Phone: +64 (4) 385 8247 Fax: +64 (4) 385 8873
Email: College.NZ@surgeons.org

Aotearoa NZ Manager

Justine Peterson
Justine.Peterson@surgeons.org

Surgical Advisors – Aotearoa NZ

Sarah Rennie - sarah.rennie@surgeons.org
Spencer Beasley - spencer.beasley@surgeons.org

Senior Accountant

Raji Divekar
Raji.Divekar@surgeons.org

Training (Aotearoa NZ)

Gloria Aumaivao-Tasi
Gloria.Aumaivao-Tasi@surgeons.org

SIMGs (Aotearoa NZ)

Celia Stanyon
Celia.Stanyon@surgeons.org

Māori Health Project Officer

Sheryll Hoera
sheryll.hoera@surgeons.org

Communications Specialist

Diana Blake
Diana.Blake@surgeons.org

