



Rural Surgery Section Newsletter



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

I would like to welcome everyone back to 2020. I hope you enjoyed a restful and vitalising time with family and friends. Sadly as we begin this year, the devastation caused by the Australian bushfires is far-reaching and our rural and regional colleagues have been disproportionately impacted. Our thoughts extend to those affected by it. If you are need of support for personal health issues, including mental health, or financial support and aid, RACS provides free confidential help to all Fellows, Trainees and IMGs through [Converge International](#). To access Converge, click [here](#).

This year the section committee will be focussing on putting forth recommendations to RACS Council and Professional Standards and Development Board. These recommendations come from the strategy meeting held

at the committee's annual face to face meeting, more details below.

Dr Bridget Clancy MBBS FRACS GAICD

Rural Surgery Section Committee Annual Face to Face Meeting

Members met face to face to discuss the current issues faced by rural surgical training and workforce and strategies moving forward to address them.

The committee is committed to advocating on behalf of our surgical Fellows and healthcare professionals in the Northern Territory and Tasmania, where they face critical workforce shortages and insufficient government health funding. The RACS Council is also backing up these efforts to address compromised surgical training IMG support and workforce recruitment and retention.

Linkages with the Surgical Specialty Training Boards were strengthened last year through constructive meetings held with Australian and New Zealand Boards in General Surgery, Australian Orthopaedic Association Federal Training Committee, and Australian Board of Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery. These relations and those with other Training Boards will continue to be maintained in the new year. Recognition of rural prior work exposure or rural origin of applicants to the SET selection process was advocated for and it is very encouraging to see some training boards adopt this policy.

The development of a Northern Australia surgical training network was raised as a possibility as a way of producing a sustainable surgical workforce in the Top End.

Prevocational (pre-SET) and unaccredited doctors present a promising pool of candidates to recruit to rural surgery and sustain a rural workforce.

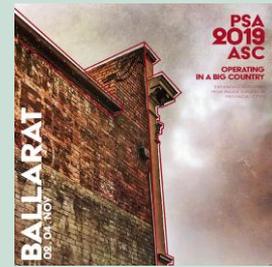
Policies such as advocating for government funding to these posts and awarding selection points for rural work experience were discussed as ways of encouraging uptake of a rural surgical career.

These will form part of the recommendations we plan to present to the Board and hope to implement in the coming years.

Rural Coach Program at the PSA Ballarat 2019 Annual Scientific Conference

With thanks to GSA, ten Rural Coach Rural Surgery Grants were awarded to Trainees and Junior Doctors to attend the Provincial Surgeons of Australia 2019 ASC. The PSA ASC provides a fantastic networking platform for Trainees and Junior Doctors who are interested in a future rural and regional surgical career.

The PSA 2020 ASC will be held from 6-8 August 2020 in Bega, NSW. For more information click [here](#).



Spinifex Network – participating in an Australian Rural Health and Medical Research Network

Boosting rural medical research is needed to reduce health inequality and improve health outcomes. In addressing the deficiency in rural medical research, the Spinifex Network was formed as an innovative and functional way to improve health and medical research outcomes and their impact in regional, rural and remote Australia. The first task of the Spinifex Network is to develop a grant proposal for national research funding to take to government in early 2020. Led by the NSW Regional Health Partners and University of New England, RACS is strongly supportive of these efforts and aims to actively engage in the process. More information can be found at www.spinifexnetwork.com.au

Queensland Government Establishment of the Office of Rural Health

The Office will act as Queensland Health's 'hub' for rural and remote Health. While it is early days, it is intended the Office will draw on expertise from across the state to:

- improve access to services
- enhance patient safety
- drive rural and remote health planning
- facilitate a visible network across rural and remote Queensland
- give a strong, shared voice to the design, delivery and evaluation of health services
- coordinate reporting on the health outcomes of rural and remote Queenslanders

- strengthen workforce planning across health professions
- support the wellbeing of staff working in rural and remote Queensland.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL SPECIALISTS AUSTRALIA (SRSA) - FUNDING ROUND 5

[Applications close 31 January 2020](#)

SRSA is an Australian Government funded initiative to provide rural specialists with access to professional support and training opportunities.

Funding conditions:

- Applicants to have been living and working in a rural area (MMM2 to MMM7) for at least 12 months
- Up to \$2,000 per training day, up to 5 days (i.e. \$10,000)
- CPD activity must be completed between 1 April 2020 to 30 April 2021
- Practical skills workshops and courses will be prioritised over Annual Scientific Meetings.
- All CPD activities must be completed within Australia.
- Grant funds will be issued upon completion of the approved CPD activity.

For more information and application details click [here](#).

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

RACS RURAL SURGERY FELLOWSHIP FOR PROVINCIAL SURGEONS

[Applications close Monday 24 February 2020](#)

Three fellowship grants are available each valued up to \$10,000 and are to be used for activities that advance surgical skills and rural practice. Fellows practising in non-metropolitan Australia and New Zealand are eligible to apply. For further information on the fellowship and how to apply please click [here](#).

RACS SURGICAL SKILLS COURSE GRANT FOR RURAL JUNIOR DOCTORS

Applications close Monday 24 February 2020

The Surgical Skills Course Grant is a new bursary established by RACS to promote and support the development of rural surgery as a career path. It is designed to support rural based junior doctors interested in rural practice, undertake a surgical skills course in a rural or regional area. The grant may be used toward travel, accommodation or course fees. For further information on the grant and how to apply please click [here](#).

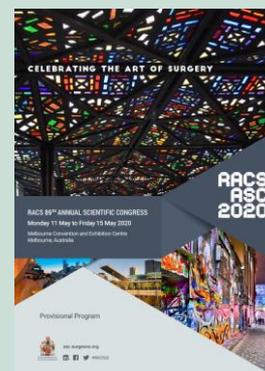
Events

RACS 89th Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) 2020

Theme: Celebrating the Art of Surgery

Monday 11 – Friday 15 May 2020

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre,
Melbourne, Victoria



Practical Quality Colonoscopy Skills Workshop

Monday 11 May 2020, 8:30am – 3:00pm

RACS Melbourne Office, 250 – 290 Spring Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002

This workshop provided by the National Endoscopy Training Initiative [NETI] is designed to provide educational opportunities for skills improvement in colonoscopy and will be convened by Mr Iain Skinner. Practical elements of colonoscopy technique, methods and tips for greatly increasing polyp detection rates are dealt with in this workshop. It is an ideal adjunct to address any quality improvement issues raised by the Recertification Audit process and strongly promotes the ideal of high quality colonoscopy.

Cost: \$70.00 incl. GST. Registration is available through the RACS 2020 ASC online registration form.

Rural Surgery Section Annual Business Meeting

Tuesday 12 May 2020, 5:30 pm

ASC Melbourne - Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Victoria

Rural Section Dinner combined with Surgical Directors, General, Quality & Safety and Surgical Education

Tuesday 12 May 2020, 7:00pm – 10:30pm

Cost: \$160.00 per person

Jardin Tan

Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra VIC 3141

7th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

Theme: Shaping the Future

Monday 25 – Tuesday 26 May 2020

Alice Springs Convention Centre, Northern Territory



RACS Tasmania Annual Scientific Meeting

Theme: Robotics

Saturday 22 August 2020

Location in Hobart TBA



2020 Back to Darwin Conference and Gala Dinner

Theme: Did you spend some time training in Darwin? If so we'd like you to 'Come Back to Darwin 2020!'

Friday 12 June 2020

Education Meeting, Darwin Convention Centre,
Northern Territory

Gala Dinner, Parliament House



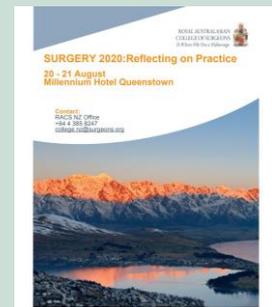
Provincial Surgeons of Australia (PSA) Annual Scientific Conference 2020
Theme: Recent Advances & Controversies in General Surgery

Thursday 6 – Saturday 8 August 2020, Bega, NSW
Bega, NSW (near Merimbula)



RACS New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting
Theme: Surgery 2020: Reflecting On Practice

Thursday 20 – Friday 21 August 2020
Millennium Hotel, Queenstown, New Zealand



RACS SA, NT & WA Annual Scientific Meeting - combined with the Surgical Directors Leadership Forum

Theme: A Safer Theatre for All
Thursday 27 – Saturday 29 August 2020
Cable Beach Club Resort, Broome, Western Australia



Latest

surgical vacancies

Careers



The RACS website is regularly updated with surgical vacancies.

[See all jobs](#)

RACS support program

Fellows, Trainees and IMGs are reminded that free confidential counselling is available through Converge International. [Find out more.](#)

