

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3131
Department:	Fellowship Services		
Title:	Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgery Section Awards		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy details the awarding of the:

- a. Mark Smithers Award for Clinical Research in Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery
- b. David Fletcher Award for Clinical Research in Hepatobiliary Surgery
- c. Paul O'Brien Award for Clinical Research in Bariatric Surgery
- d. Leslie Nathanson Award for Translational Research and Innovation

by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), and the Upper Gastrointestinal (GI), Hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) and Obesity Surgery Section (the Section).

The awards were established by the Section in 2021 for the best free research papers at the Annual Scientific Congress (ASC).

The awards are named in honour of:

a. Professor Mark Smithers

The **Mark Smithers Award for Clinical Research in Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery** is awarded to the best oral presentation for clinical research in the field of Oesophago-gastric surgery. The award acknowledges the outstanding contribution Professor Smithers has made to clinical research and leadership within the field of Oesophago-gastric surgery in Australasia.

Professor Mark Smithers is:

- Mayne Professor and Head of the Discipline of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Queensland
- Director of the Upper GI and Soft Tissue Surgical Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital
- Past President, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand Gastric and Oesophageal Surgeons Association (AANZGOSA)
- Past Chair, Section of Academic Surgery, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Member of the Queensland Cancer Control Safety and Quality Partnership, chairing the Oesophago-gastric Cancer Collaborative
- Executive member of the International Gastric Cancer Association, and
- Co-chair, Publication & Audit Subcommittee of the Research & Database Committee, International Society for Diseases of the Esophagus (ISDE).

Professor Smithers is involved with the early development and progression of minimally invasive surgery for upper gastro-intestinal tract pathology, including benign hiatal surgery and esophageal resection. His clinical and research work focuses on the multidisciplinary evidence-based management of cancer of the oesophagus and stomach with an emphasis on improving patient outcomes including quality of life. He is chief investigator on a number of grants assessing the epidemiology and management of oesophageal and gastric cancer (NIH, USA and NHMRC, Australia) and is lead surgical investigator in a number of Phase II and III trials relating to the role of neoadjuvant therapy for oesophago-gastric cancer. Most recently he is the surgical principal investigator of an international a multi-centre randomised trial assessing the role of preoperative chemo-radiation for locally advanced gastric cancer.

Approved By:	Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee	Original Issue:	May 2021
Document Owner:	Fellowship Services Committee	Version:	2
		Approval Date:	October 2023
		Review Date:	October 2028

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3131
Department:	Fellowship Services		
Title:	Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgery Section Awards		

In 2018, Professor Smithers became a Member of the Order of Australia for service to medicine in the fields of Gastrointestinal and melanoma surgery, to medical education and to professional organisations.

b. Professor David Fletcher

The **David Fletcher Award for Clinical Research in Hepatobiliary Surgery** is awarded to the best oral presentation for clinical research in the field of Hepatobiliary surgery. The award acknowledges the outstanding contribution which Professor Fletcher has made to clinical research and leadership within the field of Gastrointestinal and HPB surgery in Australasia.

Professor David Fletcher is:

- Emeritus Professor, University of West Australia (teaching and supervising research)
- Emeritus Consultant Surgeon and past Clinical Director of Surgery, Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospital Group
- Councillor, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (specialty elected representative)
- Inaugural Chair, RACS Surgical Directors Section
- Inaugural Chair, RACS Environmental Sustainability in Surgical Practice Working Group
- Past Chair, RACS Board of Regional Chairs, Academy of Surgical Educators and Professional Development Committee
- Past President of the Surgical Research Society Australasia
- Honorary Life Member, Society American Gastrointestinal Surgeons for international contribution to minimal access surgery.

Professor Fletcher was instrumental in developing and introducing laparoscopic surgery to Australia, and in 1990 was a member of the Austin Hospital team that performed the first laparoscopic gall bladder surgery in the country. He was awarded the RACS Academy of Surgical Educators, Educator of Merit Award in 2017. Professor Fletcher contributed to the National Institute for Clinical Studies (NICS) of which he was a member from 2000 - 2005, and assisted in closing the gap between current and best practice.

In 2018 Professor Fletcher become a Member of the Order of Australian for significant service to medicine in the field of gastrointestinal surgery as a clinician, educator, researcher, and leader in health service delivery.

c. Professor Paul O'Brien

The **Paul O'Brien Award for Clinical Research in Bariatric Surgery** is awarded to the best oral presentation for clinical research in the field of Bariatric surgery. The award acknowledges the outstanding contribution which Professor O'Brien has made to clinical research and leadership within the field of Bariatric surgery in Australasia.

Professor Paul O'Brien is:

- Emeritus Professor of Surgery, Monash University
- Previous Head of the Monash University's Department of Surgery at the Alfred Hospital (19 years)
- Past President (1997 – 2004) and Life Member of the Australian and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society (ANZMOSS)
- Past Council member of the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity
- National Medical Director of the American Institute of Gastric Banding.

Approved By:	Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee	Original Issue:	May 2021
Document Owner:	Fellowship Services Committee	Version:	2
		Approval Date:	October 2023
		Review Date:	October 2028

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3131
Department:	Fellowship Services		
Title:	Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgery Section Awards		

Professor O'Brien's principal areas of clinical and research interest are in the morbidity of obesity and the health benefits of weight loss. He founded the Centre for Obesity Research and Education (CORE) at Monash University in 2004 and is the Emeritus Director. He is Head of the Centre for Bariatric Surgery in Melbourne. This is the most active clinical service for the surgical treatment of obesity in Australia. He is the advisory editor of the journal 'Obesity Surgery'.

Professor O'Brien has published more than 250 papers in the medical literature and has been actively involved in conducting postgraduate courses and workshops on obesity and its treatments in Australia, Europe, USA, Asia-Pacific countries, South America and Canada. He was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2017.

d. Dr Leslie Nathanson

The **Leslie Nathanson Award for Translational Research and Innovation** is awarded to the best oral presentation for translational research and/ or innovation in the field of Oesophago gastric, Hepato-pancreato-biliary or Bariatric surgery. The Leslie Nathanson Award for Translational Research and Innovation acknowledges the outstanding contribution which Dr Nathanson has made to innovation in the field of Upper GI Surgery in Australasia.

Dr Nathanson graduated from University of Cape Town Medical School in 1978, migrated to Australia in 1983, passing Australian Medical Exam Council registration exams two months later and completed general surgical training in Brisbane, FRACS in 1988.

His experience was further broadened by working in Europe with Professor Sir Alfred Cuschieri in Ninewells Hospital, Dundee as an Honorary Senior Registrar concentrating on developing Laparoscopic Surgery, from 1989 - 1991. He returned to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in August 1991 as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Queensland, Royal Brisbane Hospital, progressing to Associate Professor in September 1994. Although he resigned from the University in 2001, he continued as a Visiting Medical Officer and head of the Hepatobiliary Unit at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital until 2018. Dr Nathanson was awarded an honorary fellowship from the Edinburgh College of Surgeons in 2012.

Dr Nathanson is well known for the Nathanson laparoscopic liver retractor and the development of the common bile duct basket used for extracting common bile duct stones. His randomised trial of ERCP vs Laparoscopic treatment of CBD stones was published in 2005 and was a personal landmark trial in the treatment of common bile duct stones.

His interests concentrated on hepatobiliary, upper GI and laparoscopic surgery, especially the evolution of laparoscopic fundoplication surgery for reflux. This culminated in publication of baseline data of adult oesophageal junction distensibility during general anaesthetic and laparoscopy and its application in 841 funduplications.

2. KEYWORDS

Mark Smithers, David Fletcher, Paul O'Brien, Leslie Nathanson, award, Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgery, Research, Annual Scientific Congress.

3. BODY OF POLICY

Criteria for eligibility

The awards are open to all applicants for research conducted in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and accepted for podium presentations in the free paper sessions of the Upper GI, HPB

Approved By:	Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee	Original Issue:	May 2021
Document Owner:	Fellowship Services Committee	Version:	2
		Approval Date:	October 2023
		Review Date:	October 2028

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3131
Department:	Fellowship Services		
Title:	Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgery Section Awards		

and Obesity Surgery Programs at the RACS ASC. This may include pre-vocational doctors, Trainees and Younger Fellows who are within five years of obtaining their FRACS, plus equivalent levels from recognised international surgical colleges.

In addition, the Les Nathanson Award for Translational Research and Innovation is for research that has been conducted as part of a higher degree and relates to the fields of Upper GI, HPB or Bariatric Surgery.

Award Criteria

The awards are presented for the best paper presented by those eligible at the ASC as judged by at least two members of the Section using an objective structured scoring system.

Value of the Award

The awards provide a stipend cash amount of \$1500 (AUD) each, for a \$1000 prize and \$500 to defray registration at a relevant conference (AANZGOSA, AANZHPBA or ANZMOSS). Recipients will also receive a certificate and engraved plaque.

Frequency of the Award

The awards are presented annually if research papers of sufficient merit are presented in any or all of the categories.

Funding

Funding for the awards comes from the Upper GI, HPB and Obesity Surgical Fund.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Travel and Accommodation Policy

Approver Fellowship Services Committee

Authoriser Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee

Approved By:	Professional Standards and Fellowship Services Committee	Original Issue:	May 2021
Document Owner:	Fellowship Services Committee	Version:	2
		Approval Date:	October 2023
		Review Date:	October 2028
