

A photograph of two surgeons in an operating room, wearing blue scrubs, white masks, and surgical caps. They are focused on a surgical procedure, with one surgeon using a pair of forceps. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the surgical site.

HEADLIGHTS

ISSUE 1 | APRIL 2023

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Aya Basam

WELCOME

Hi everyone,

We are excited to welcome you to the first edition of Headlights 2023 from the Australasian Students' Surgical Association (ASSA)!

My name is Aya Basam, I am a final year medical student at Monash University in Melbourne. I feel very privileged to be taking on the role of ASSA President for 2022/23, working alongside Aiden Jabur (Vice-President External, Griffith University), Angelina Arora (Vice-President Internal, Flinders University) and the rest of the incredible ASSA 2022/23 committee and subcommittees. I am stepping into this role having been the ASSA Events Officer for 2021/22 as well as TASMAN Co-Lead for 2021/22.

ASSA is a not-for-profit association that represents and unites all 26 student surgical societies and their 20,000+ members across Australia and New Zealand. ASSA strives to provide medical students with exceptional opportunities to grow their interest in surgery and develop their skills in the field. We aim to promote information sharing and innovation through our various international and national events, academic resources, mentorship programs, collaborative research and global surgery advocacy streams. ASSA's two flagship events, the annual Leadership Weekend and the Australasian Students' Surgical Conference (ASSC) are also running for the 9th consecutive year in 2023! This year, we are also very excited about the expansion of our new in-person Stated-Based Surgical Hub Workshops across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand.

I am incredibly excited for all of the initiatives and opportunities that we have lined up for the year. Our entire committee is very passionate about fulfilling our mission of reaching surgically inclined students across ANZ and providing them with high quality events, advocacy, academic resources, networking opportunities and promotion of global surgery.

As medical students, I know it can often be difficult to find ways to get involved and learn more about all the facets of a surgical career. Therefore, I hope that ASSA can reach all of you as the future leaders of surgery and make a meaningful and positive impact to help you along this journey. I am very excited to continue seeing ASSA grow to continue motivating, inspiring and driving the passion in our next generation of surgeons!

Keep an eye out for all the opportunities the incredible ASSA 2022/23 committee and subcommittees have prepared for you and I look forward to meeting many of you this coming year!

My best wishes for your university studies and please don't hesitate to contact me for any questions.

Kindest regards,

Aya Basam
ASSA President
president@anzsurgsocs.org





Australasian Students' Surgical Association

2023 Executive Committee



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AUSTRALASIAN STUDENTS' SURGICAL CONFERENCE

2023

AT THE CUTTING EDGE

This year, we are holding the conference in the warm city of Adelaide, South Australia, at the Adelaide Convention Centre on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people. Situated in the heart of Adelaide, with the plenary room overlooking the Torrens River, with flexible spaces for breakouts and workshops, not to mention extensive in-house catering including options for those with dietary requirements, it is an incredible venue for you to enjoy three jam-packed days of surgical education and entertainment!

Our aim is to inspire the next generation of health practitioners to consider the numerous pathways surgery beholds and to understand where your passion may lie. We are excited to present this three-day hybrid conference, allowing delegates from Australia, New Zealand and all across the world to attend either in-person or online. The in-person conference will be running from the 28th to the 30th of April, while the online conference will take place on the following weekend from the 5th to the 7th of May.

In line with this year's theme, At The Cutting Edge, we have curated speakers and demonstrators at the vanguard of their fields to showcase the innovative fields within surgery and to inspire future surgeons. Prepare yourselves to get some hands-on experience!

With delegates, demonstrators and speakers from all corners of Australia and New Zealand, it is the ideal opportunity for students to meet like-minded individuals in-person or virtually to share their passion for surgical excellence, research and advocacy. Over three days, we will host a series of keynote speakers, unique breakout sessions, cutting-edge workshops, social events, as well as innovative research sessions designed to highlight key aspects of Australasia's contribution to the surgical field.

We encourage everyone to use ASSC23 as a unique opportunity to inspire and be inspired by others; a platform to form lifelong connections with peers and mentors.

We hope to see you in ASSC 2023!

Sincerely,

Annie Lim (Convenor ASSC23)

Jordi Elliott, Chiara Gorlach & Alex Mesecke
(Deputy Convenors ASSC23)



ASSA ACADEMICS

INTRODUCING AUSTRALASIAN STUDENTS' SURGICAL EDUCATION TOOLS

If you are a medical student looking for resources to help you up your game - whether this be on placement or during exams - look no further!

The ASSA Academics team has been busy at work creating student-designed resources, for students, called ASSETs (Australasian Students' Surgical Education Tools). This diverse, and growing, bank of resources has the ultimate goal of being a one-stop-shop for medical students wanting to learn more about various surgical related topics.

Anatomy Snapshots - Similar to Surgical Snapshots, Anatomy Snapshots aim to provide a concise overview of important anatomical concepts that will help you prior to placements or exams.

Long Case Resources - Designed to help you revise and test your knowledge of common clinical cases by enabling you to follow along with a case presentation, history and examination, relevant investigations, diagnosis and management of a patient.

Surgical Snapshots - We are building on the great work of previous ASSA Academics teams by building on the bank of Surgical Snapshots. These are two-page, concise summaries of common presentations and surgeries that are designed to be a tool for quick revision prior to placements or exams.

Practice OSCEs - A resource which provides clinical scenarios designed for preparing for practical clinical exams, including histories, frequently asked questions, and ASSETs tips and tricks.

All ASSETs created are reviewed by junior doctors and trainees, which not only creates opportunities for junior doctors to pass on their knowledge, but also ensures that our resources are up-to-date and accurate.

If you would like to access these amazing resources, please go ahead via the ASSA membership portal! Signing up for an annual ASSA membership is quick and easy, and only \$5/year - through this membership you can access all ASSA wide initiatives which includes study and research resources, events, discount codes, podcasts and so much more.



MEET YOUR ACADEMICS SUBCOMMITTEE

Australasian Students' Surgical Association

2023 Academics Sub-committee



JENNIFER VU

ACADEMICS + EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Sydney Uni



AARON LERCH

ACADEMICS + EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Queensland Uni



YISHU WANG

EVENT LIAISON OFFICER
Adelaide Uni



BEC MARTIN

PODCAST/ACADEMIC SUB-COMMITTEE
Monash Uni

RECAP: ASSA LEADERSHIP DAY



Leadership Day 2023

By ASSA Events

The ASSA Leadership Day has been run annually since the organisation's inception many years ago. It is a unique and valuable opportunity for all medical students in Australia & New Zealand to learn from established leaders in surgery, share ideas and widen their mindsets. Until 2021, this was done at the RACS headquarters in Sydney, where the surgical society presidents throughout Australasia were invited for a weekend of upskilling and networking.

However due to COVID-19 disturbances, Leadership Day 2022 had to be run entirely online... But this was to change for 2023.

For Leadership Day 2023, we came back with a twist - an online/in-person hybrid conference! This meant that people from all over Australasia could still attend from their home bases, but surgical society presidents and our executive committee could still get together to learn and network in person too, this time at the RACS Headquarters in Queensland! Our Events team worked around the clock over their summer holidays to make this event happen and we couldn't be happier with the results.

The overarching theme was 'Exploring Belonging: Ensuring diversity and inclusion as leaders in an evolving society.' The demographics of society continually change & become more diverse with time. What does not change however is the sense of belonging that all human beings look for. As the leaders of today and the future, it is our duty to advocate for our patients. So corresponding to this, we were grateful to have incredible guests who each brought their own insights on diversity and the ways they were leading Medicine towards that direction.

The event was held on Saturday, 4th February 2023 with a varied and exciting program including:

- A keynote address by a very established leader in surgery.
- A collaborative research introduction address.
- An exciting panel with 3 surgical leaders at varied levels in their careers.
- A total of two different interactive breakout sessions to choose from; 1 for online attendees and another for the in-person attendees.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Our Keynote speaker was **Associate Professor Deborah Bailey**. Her many leadership roles include being previous President of the Australian & NZ Association of Paediatric Surgery, previous Chair of the Surgical Education and RACS Specialist Training Board of Paediatric Surgery for Australia & NZ, previous Chair of the RACS Queensland State Committee, 2022 Councillor for RACS and SAPS Clinical Director for Gold Coast Health Services (2014-2019). On top of this she is also an adjunct professor at Bond & Griffith Medical Schools. From her life story to her expertise, she had a huge wealth of wisdom and inspiration to share with all the attendees and we were so grateful to learn from her experience.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

We had the lovely **Associate Professor Amanda Dawson** leading our Collaborative Research Address. A/Prof Dawson is an academic general surgeon, and the Clinical Dean of the University of Newcastle Central Coast Clinical School. She has a strong commitment to the quality of pre-vocational education. In 2022 she received the Inaugural RACS and NSW Health Women in Surgery Leadership award in acknowledgement of her sustained and effective contributions to the AMC, RACS and the JMP. As a positive female surgical role model, she stands for equity and diversity, and has an established track record for training and inspiring students.



Then indeed we had a wonderful panel with speakers from various levels of practice who had a candid discussion about diversity and succeeding in the workforce. Joining us were A/Prof Bernard Whitfield, Dr Barbara Woodhouse, Dr Helena Franco. And for our interactive online breakout session called “Leading as a JMO”, we had Dr Claudia Villaneuva.

PANELISTS



A/Prof Whitfield is an ENT surgeon, who has led ENT outreach visits to remote Indigenous Australian communities for the past 15 years and is the current ENT coordinator for the RACS Global Health Outreach Program.

Dr Woodhouse is a dual accredited Oral & Maxillofacial surgeon & Dentist, who has been shortlisted as a QLD nominee for the 2023 Australian of the Year, in recognition of her overseas surgical aid, and advocacy for diversity for medical students & junior doctors.



Dr Franco is currently undertaking a Masters at Harvard Medical School, as a Sir Robert Menzies Scholar of Australia, received the 2018 Bond University Young Alumni Award and is the Vice Chair for the International Student Surgical Network.

BREAKOUT

Dr Villanueva is a Cardiothoracic SET 4 Trainee from NSW with a special interest in surgical education, diversity & inclusion in surgery as well as patient safety. She has a Master of Surgical Education from University of Melbourne and is a member of the RACS Academy of Surgical Educators.



On the second day of our jam-packed weekend, we had our ART course, an excellent upskilling opportunity for any interested future researchers. TASMAN's (Trials and Audits in Surgery by Medical Students in Australia and New Zealand) ART Course is an exciting half day workshop tailor-made for those with a budding interest in collaborative research but unsure about where to begin.

It covered 4 main areas of interest:

- A brief introduction to collaborative research.
- The details on site setup.
- An information on patient consent.
- An introduction to the OPERAS Study.

Overall, the event was a great success and we cannot wait for more budding students to attend our other events lined up for the rest of the year!



MEET THE EVENTS SUBCOMMITTEE



Australasian Students' Surgical Association

2023 Events Sub-committee



CATHERINE MURPHY
EVENTS LOGISTICS OFFICER
Auckland Uni



CHLOE OH
EVENTS LOGISTICS OFFICER
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Adelaide Uni



SRIYA BOBBA
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UWA

ASSA GLOBAL SURGERY

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ASSA GLOBALSURG TEAM

In This Issue

WHY IS GLOBAL
SUGERY IMPORTANT

GETTING INVOLVE IN
GLOBAL SURGERY

WELCOME FROM ASSA GLOBAL SUGERY

BY ANGELYN NEOH & OSCAR WATSON

We are delighted to introduce ourselves as the Global Surgery Committee for 2023! The purpose of our work this year will be to increase awareness of this important and underrecognized area of global health, and strive to achieve tangible improvement through advocacy, research, and academic engagement.

What is Global Surgery?

Global surgery is a vast field spanning surgery, anaesthesia, public and global health. It seeks to eliminate the profound inequalities experienced in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) in their pursuit of safe, timely and effective surgical care. Surgery is not a luxury, distinct from the rest of healthcare, that can only be afforded to wealthy nations; as stated by President of the World Bank Jim Kim, "surgery is an indivisible, indispensable part of health care... [it] can help millions of people lead healthier, more productive lives".

Although the need for improvement in surgical care among LMICs has been acknowledged for decades,

the most concrete articulation of the needs, targets and barriers came from the 2015 Lancet Commission on Global Surgery. This commission revealed stark truths about the 'neglected stepchild of global health': that deaths from conditions requiring surgical care now surpassed those from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined, and that for the first time in history, you are more likely to die of surgically treatable conditions than an infectious disease.

How can I get involved?

The current situation is clearly untenable, so here's how can you get involved with ASSA Global Surgery to make a difference:

1. Global Surgery Week - in recognition of Global Surgery Day on the 25th of May, ASSA Global Surgery will holding events, competitions and talks throughout the fourth week of May. Keep an eye out for further information on our social media channels for how to get involved!

2. Journal Clubs - Join us for monthly journal clubs to discuss the latest research and news from the field of Global Surgery

3. Follow us! - Join the conversation by following our social media channels;

Instagram: @assaxincision

Facebook: ASSA Global Surgery x Incision

Twitter: @ASSAxInciSioN



ASSA PODCAST

THE OPERATING LIST



To paraphrase The Poltergeist – we're back! ASSA's coveted podcast The Operating List is returning to Spotify this April to satiate your hunger for learning how you can make it as a surgeon and how to perform surgeries when you can't physically make it into the operating theatre.

Before giving you a taste of what's to come for Season 3, here's a recap of some of the fantastic stories and honest advice that was gleaned from the influential surgeons we sat down with in Season 2. We started off with Bundaberg ophthalmologist Dr. Jai Panchapakesan. As well as a whole episode stepping us through lens replacement, Jai also explained his choice of ophthalmology, which stemmed from ophthalmology's incorporation of mathematics, provision of instant results, and anatomy that looks just as it does in a textbook.

He noted the family friendly nature of ophthalmology, both as a trainee with part-time opportunities, and as a consultant when you can work in school hours. Working rurally has allowed Dr. Panchapakesan a generalised career, a busy practice straight out of fellowship, and a great place to raise his young family. His main advice centred around figuring out what you want to do early, chasing it once you know, and never looking back (if you like something a lot, you'll learn to love it). He noted the family friendly nature of ophthalmology, both as a trainee with part-time opportunities, and as a consultant when you can work in school hours. Working rurally has allowed Dr. Panchapakesan a generalised career, a busy practice straight out of fellowship, and a great place to raise his young family. His main advice centred around figuring out what you want to do early, chasing it once you know, and never looking back (if you like something a lot, you'll learn to love it).

He also spoke to managing your precious spare time; as doctors we think that compared to medicine, everything else is easy. We must learn that although we may be able to learn other skills, the person who does it every single day will be much better at it than us.

ASSA PODCAST

We heard from the Deputy Director of Anaesthesia of Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, Dr. Darren Wolfers. Dr. Wolfers is an adrenaline junkie. In his time off, he's either signing on to adventure trips or is working in medical aid, specifically with the paediatric and adult cardiac surgical units he's set up in low-and-middle income countries. He takes us through the logistics of medical aid – the importance of local buy-in and the additional challenges such as those posed by malaria and sickle cell disease. Dr. Wolfers has also been heavily involved in rescue medicine with Care Flight Sydney for 15 years. To this end, he highlights the major learning points of this experience were around quality and safety (such as closed-loop communication), because if you have a bad day as a doctor, you go home in good health (even though your patient is not). If you have a bad day as a pilot, you are also at risk of death, along with your patient and the rest of the team. Finally, Dr. Wolfers provides insight into what we as surgical enthusiasts need to know about working in theatre with anaesthetists, and that is communication, 'Anaesthetics is one of the ultimate teamwork games... we don't talk, the patients don't do well.'

Colorectal (CR) and academic surgeon Dr. Joseph Kong spoke to us about his journey to CR surgery and his genuine passion for research.

Dr. Kong became interested in CR surgery from a young age when he learned of the high prevalence of CR cancer. This, combined with the knowledge that there are good surgical options for CR cancer, cemented in Dr. Kong's mind that if he pursued this career he would be providing multitudes of patients with great outcomes. Dr. Kong lives by two philosophies: if you're going to do something, make sure it's challenging, and if there's an obstacle, arm yourself with the skills that will not only allow you to overcome it, but will allow you to be more efficient and become the surgeon you want to be. The example he gives is the obstacle of waiting for statisticians to analyse research data in a timely manner. He took time off from his SET training to do a Masters in statistics so he can efficiently analyse the data himself. Another example is that whenever he wants to learn a new surgical technique, he takes at least three months leave to go to a place that specialises in it. This way, rather than practicing the new skill on vulnerable patients without supervision, he is supported by experts in the field until he becomes self-sufficient. He did this during his Fellowship in Houston, Texas, where he learnt robotic CR cancer surgical techniques that he has brought back to Melbourne. He gives practical advice for approaching research as a student or junior doctor, discusses the cultural shift around having a family as a surgeon, and gives crucial pieces of advice for juniors.

ASSA PODCAST

For instance, he states that any medical subspeciality is difficult - it's a natural human instinct to be critical of someone else's dream, but if you want something, you need to go for it.

Finally, we heard from Dr. Markus Trochsler, Head of the Hepatobiliary and Upper Gastrointestinal Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide, whose special interest is liver surgery.

Dr. Trochsler is from Switzerland - he ended up in Adelaide serendipitously by landing a two-year clinical fellowship there. Throughout the episode Dr. Trochsler gives advice about how to organise a Fellowship overseas, with specific advice for Switzerland. He recommends hospitals that are fantastic to work in as doctors from Australia, with the one closest to his heart being the university hospital in Bern, because you can sit by the lakes in the morning and be skiing in the mountains in the afternoon. Dr. Trochsler was another double-whammy presenter, stepping us through an appendicectomy to make sure we're armed with answers to consultant questions when next scrubbed in to emergency theatre. We have many more influential surgeons lined up for Season 3 of The Operating List, with episodes covering cardiothoracics, neurosurgery, paediatric surgery and general surgery, among others.

Excitingly, we'll be launching the season with a very special episode from a surgeon who has dedicated his life to global surgery and improving access to health in low resource settings, and who in 2018 received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Dartmouth University to recognise his extraordinary role in providing medical miracles for patients on every continent. Make sure to tune in!

Alexandra Wilson

2023 co-producer of The Operating List.



MEET THE PODCAST SUBCOMMITTEE



Australasian Students' Surgical Association

2023 Podcast Sub-committee



BEC MARTIN
PODCAST SUB-COMMITTEE
Monash Uni



THUSHARINI PUSHPAKUMAR
PODCAST SOCIAL MEDIA OFFICER
Bond Uni



MEET THE POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE



Australasian Students' Surgical Association

2023 Policy Sub-committee



WILLIAM GIBBUS
LEAD POLICY AUTHOR
Deakin Uni



MEET THE SPONO SUBCOMMITTEE



Australasian Students' Surgical Association

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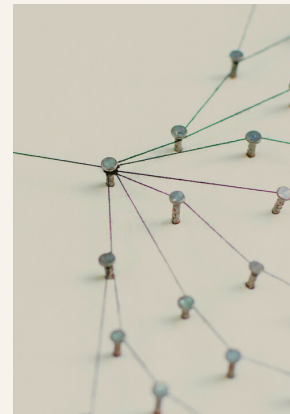
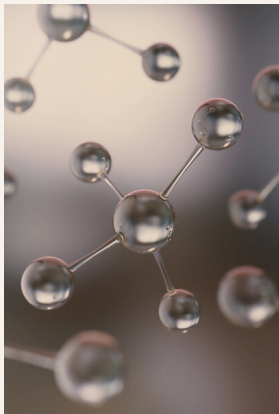
APRIL NEWSLETTER

TASMAN UPDATE

SCROLL TO VIEW

TASMAN 2023

*An update from the Trials and Audits in Surgery by
Medical students in Australia and New Zealand
(TASMAN) Collaborative*



What is TASMAN?

TASMAN collaborative is an organisation of medical students and non-SET trainees which was founded in 2019. TASMAN aims to unite surgically-inclined students who contribute to large-scale, high-quality, regional, national and international projects.

Welcome from TASMAN



Hey there! We wanted to share with you all some exciting news about the recent ART course that was organized by TASMAN in collaboration with ASSC. This course was designed to introduce students to the concept of collaborative research. The course was held in early February and was led by two amazing speakers:

Professor Amanda Dawson, a general surgeon and associate professor at Newcastle University, and Dr Warren Seow, a surgical resident at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.



Professor Dawson shared her valuable insights on the important roles that students can play in collaborative research and emphasized the need for students to take initiative and be proactive in seeking out research projects. Dr Seow discussed how students can get involved in research projects and provided tips on how to identify potential research projects, reach out to researchers and clinicians, and develop research skills. Students were also given the opportunity to ask questions and interact during our workshop. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Professor Dawson and Dr Seow for their outstanding contributions to this course and to ASSC for collaborating on this initiative. We hope that this course was useful and inspired students to consider collaborative research as a potential career path. We encourage all medical students to take advantage of such opportunities to learn and grow. Thank you for reading and stay tuned for more exciting news and events from TASMAN and ASSC!

Cheers to collaboration and new beginnings!

TASMAN Committee 2023

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Australasian Students' Surgical Association
2023 Executive Committee

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We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Headlights*. If you would like to submit content or ideas for our next issue, please email promotions@anzsurgsocs

Please note that future newsletters will be exclusively available for ASSA members