



# Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons

## President's Annual Report Annual General Meeting - November 2023

**This report spans the period July 2022 – June 2023.**

At the Annual General Meeting of the RACDS held on Friday 18 November 2022, I was elected as the President of the College Board for two years. I sincerely thank Professor Ian Meyers OAM for guiding the College into a new and innovative phase following the disruption of meetings, educational activities, and social events with Covid-19 pandemic. I believe the College optimised the time to evaluate and refresh some of its programs to meet the expectations of our candidates.

Drs Dale Gerke, Dimitria Mersinia, Hugh Trengrove and Robin Whyman joined the College Board. I thank them as well as A/Prof John Boucher, Mr Tony Evans and Drs Shiu-Yin (Rony) Cho, Erin Mahoney and Barbara Woodhouse for their support, encouragement and advice in implementing the College's strategic goals.

A highlight in the cycle of College life is its biennial conference, the *Fine Edge of Dentistry* Conference. After the postponement of the conference in 2020, this event was greatly anticipated and was a terrific success. Held in Melbourne from 8-10 September 2022, and in conjunction with the ANZAOMS conference, it was a wonderful opportunity for both education and collegiality. I was delighted to re-connect with so many members and fellows of the College and I thank all those who attended both in person and on-line for participating. My sincere thanks also go to the organising committee who did an excellent job developing what was an outstanding educational program with exceptional speakers including the keynote speaker, Dr Charlotte Stilwell. Planning is well underway for the 2024 event in Cairns, Queensland. I urge all our Fellows and Members to mark 12 – 14 September 2024 in their diaries and start planning their attendance at what will no doubt be a wonderful opportunity to connect, learn and catch-up with colleagues and friends.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to travel to a Bendigo, Perth and Brisbane to experience first-hand the exceptional work of our Regional Committees. With the trend to move to online delivery of CPD, the regional committees fill a role by providing excellent quality presentations, ideal for our members to network and socialise.

. I encourage all Fellows and Members to keep an eye on the College communications and events webpage and where they can, support the committees and attend these events.

In line with the Strategic Plan (2021 – 2024), the College has delivered its key activities and undertaken a number of new initiatives, aimed at keeping the College relevant in a fast-changing environment.

Highlights for 2023/23 include:

- Strong membership growth throughout the 2023/23 Financial Year, with overall membership numbers (excluding students), rising by 10%. In addition, our student membership category has had strong growth, more than doubling in numbers to



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nearly 500 students. The category is vital to the long-term viability of the College by introducing students to the College, early in their dental education. My thanks to the College Fellows and Members who have volunteered to speak at dental student events to help promote the College.

- Establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Committee with representation from Indigenous dentists from both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Formal recognition of success in the Primary Dental Sciences examination, providing eligibility to be admitted to Membership and recognised with the post-nominal MRACDS(PDS). This initiative has been well received and enjoyed strong take-up in the financial year. As many of our members will know, we needed to reschedule the examination to July rather than the traditional November/December. The continuation of strong candidate numbers is testament to the quality of the examination and my thanks to everyone involved.
- Our Membership (MRACDS)GDP program continues to be popular, being fully subscribed in 2023 following the updated hybrid format proving convenient with candidates and examiners.
- The Fellowship Examination (GDP) which was successfully completed online with a pass rate of 82%, alongside the successful delivery of another round of examinations for Fellowship (SDP).
- Our Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS) program has seen significant improvements to its policies and processes which has contributed to the training program being re-accredited for a further five years. I sincerely thank all the individuals (College Fellows and staff) and the committees who have contributed to this large project.
- The establishment of three new scholarships to support the College's strategic direction of supporting future leaders in the College and dental profession and promoting equity and diversity in the governance structures. Each scholarship is valued at up to \$5,000 AUD and will be offered on an annual basis. Congratulations to the inaugural prize-winners.

The RACDS continues to strive to be a leader in the dental community. To progress this strategic priority, and following extensive consultation, the Board has established a Specialist Training Steering Committee that is overseeing the College implementing plans to become a provider of specialist dental training in the areas of Paediatric Dentistry, Special Needs Dentistry and Oral Medicine, leading to registration in Aotearoa New Zealand. This concept is a result of an identified need of our Fellows and Members across New Zealand and is intended to follow a vocational training model in a similar fashion to our OMS program does within New Zealand hospitals. Special thanks to the Steering Committee Chair and College Vice-President, Dr Erin Mahoney who is spearheading this project and to the numerous College Fellows and Members who have already volunteered to assist with this important work. Further information and communication will be provided to our members throughout the multi-year development of this work.



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Congratulations to Professor Emerita Elizabeth Martin AO on receiving the Life Fellowship Award for her many years of dedicated service including that of Registrar(GDP), examiner and Board Director. Three long-serving and committed members, namely Drs Heather Cameron, Julia Dando and Leung Siu-Fai have also been recognised for their exceptional service by being honoured with a Meritorious Service Award. Congratulations and thank you all.

In the broader community, several College members were recognised in the 2023 Honour Lists in Australia and New Zealand. Congratulations to A/Prof Neil Peppitt AM (Australia Day honours), Clinical A/Prof Sharon Liberali AO, Dr Paul Sambrook AM, Mr Graham Hall AM and A/Prof Peter Clark Ryan OAM (Australian King's Birthday honours), and Prof Emeritus Alison Mary Rich ONZM (New Zealand King's Birthday honours).

Thank you to the Registrars, the Chairs, and members of the many boards, committees, and working parties, and to the many volunteers who dedicate time to share their expertise. With the elected Vice-President, Dr Erin Mahoney, and the support of the Board I have no doubt that the College is in great hands.

Finally, special thanks to the College CEO, Brendan Peek for his leadership and guidance and to the wonderful College staff who strive for excellence in service and delivery of programs, tutorials, examinations, lectures and more.