

President's Report – Dr Julia Crawford

Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Cancer Society
AGM 2025

It is an honour to present my first President's Report at the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Cancer Society (ANZHNCS).

I begin by acknowledging the leadership of our Immediate Past President, Prof Eng Ooi, who has served this Society with so much dedication that he agreed to be the convenor for this year's Annual Scientific Meeting and still finds the time to answer my many questions about the logistics of running the society. I also thank Prof Camile Farah, Vice President, Dr Felix Sim who stepped into the role of Treasurer, Dr Aoife McGarvey for her continuing role as Secretary and for the tireless work of the broader ANZHNCS Board. Dr Eric Khoo, who has made a fantastic contribution to the board over the last three years, will be stepping down after the ASM. A huge thank you to Eric, especially for his commitment to the Education and Social Media Sub Committee, which has been exceptional. This year we also welcomed onto the board Paloma Chehade, Speech Pathology, Sophie Flemming, Clinical Anaplastologist and Dr Sally Ng, Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery. All three individuals have already made a substantial contribution, and I look forward to continuing to work with them over the coming year. We will hopefully be welcoming two new board members as well, a representative from NZ and one from Radiation Oncology.

Eng instituted a new governance structure last year and this has been working very well, helping to streamline the board members' commitments.

Annual Scientific Meeting 2025 – Adelaide

The 2025 ASM was held Friday 29 August to Sunday 31 August in Adelaide. The conference format was changed to Friday–Sunday to limit weekday work absence and accommodate workshops. While this allowed broader pre-meeting programming, attendance patterns suggest the traditional Thursday–Saturday schedule may be preferable in future.

I commend Prof Eng Ooi, the organising committee, and our PCO team from RACS for delivering an outstanding program that reinforced the ASM's reputation as a truly multidisciplinary meeting.

Education & Member Engagement

This year, we hosted two well-received webinars:

- Management of Lymphoedema in Head and Neck Cancer
- Dental Complications in Head and Neck Cancer

Both generated strong participation and positive feedback, highlighting the value of ongoing online learning alongside our ASM.

Advocacy

We continue to advocate for better access to preventative and restorative dental care for head and neck cancer patients. This includes Federal Government submissions, proposed MBS item creation, and collaborative projects with HANCA to expand telehealth support and navigation services for patients. Dr Felix Sim has taken the lead role in representing our society in this regard and we thank him for his dedication.

Inaugural Head and Neck Cancer Gala

In partnership with HANCA, we are hosting the Inaugural Head and Neck Cancer Gala on Saturday 1 November 2025 at NSW Parliament House. The primary aim of this event was to raise money for both ANZHNCS Research Foundation and HANCA but also to strengthen the ties between our two societies. Additionally, we are launching the Head and Neck Cancer Awards recognising excellence in patient care and advocacy. The gala dinner sold out six months ago which was an amazing and unexpected feat. We will look at running further Galas in the future if this is a monetary success for both societies.

A huge thank you to Rachelle Robinson, Paula Macleod, Matt Mason, Kerwin Shannon and Kevin Ng who have served on the Head and Neck Gala Fundraising Committee. This committee has done an amazing job and the silent auction site will be launched soon to help raise funds and awareness even prior to the event.

(<https://app.galabid.com/hnccgala/items>).

Chris O'Brien Travelling Fellowship

The Chris O'Brien Travelling Fellowship honours the contribution of Professor Chris O'Brien AO to head and neck cancer care, education, and research. The Fellowship provides funding for a member of the Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Cancer Society to travel to another centre overseas to learn new skills, share knowledge, and strengthen professional networks in the management of head and neck cancer.

Recent issues with the fellowship have centred around suspension of overseas travel during the COVID pandemic years and then move by the AHNS to change the cycle of an International AHNS meeting from every four years to every three years. In consultation with the ANZHNCS Board and AHNS we have now moved to a three-year cycle with an ANZHNCS Travelling fellow attending the International AHNS Meeting every three years, a AHNS Fellow attending the ANZHNCS ASM the following year and then an off year with no fellow before the cycle starts again.

The next Chris O'Brien Travelling Fellowship will be awarded for travel in 2026, with applications opening soon. Full details, including eligibility criteria and application guidelines, will be available on the ANZHNCS website closer to the opening date.

The Association Specialists (TAS)/Secretariat for ANZHNS

The society has faced some challenges with respect to the secretariat over the past 18 months. There have been multiple changes of personnel handling our society and the

handover between these personnel has been suboptimal. We are actively engaging with TAS to troubleshoot and improve the current situation to which TAS have been very responsive. We welcome Jess and Asheigh from TAS and hope that we can grow as a team together.

Looking Ahead

Future ASMs:

- 2026 – Brisbane (Thurs 27–Sat 29th Aug, with IFHNOS, >1,000 delegates expected)
- 2027 – Perth
- 2028 – Proposed in New Zealand

IFNOS/ANZHNCS 2026

The 8th World Congress of the International Federation of Head and Neck Oncologic Societies (IFHNOS) will be held in Brisbane, Australia from Thursday 27th to Saturday 29th August 2026 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Hosted jointly by IFHNOS and ANZHNCS, the congress will bring together surgeons, oncologists, researchers, and allied health professionals from across the globe to share the latest advances in head and neck cancer treatment, research, and multidisciplinary care.

The organising committee, led by Professor Sandro Porceddu as Congress Convenor, will aim to put together a stellar program. We have now secured 3 Keynote speakers; Prof Kevin Harrington, Dr Rosemary Martino and Prof Ralph Gilbert. Prof Porceddu has also kindly accepted the ANZHNCS nomination to be the Chris O'Brien Orator.

Our goals for the coming years

1. Expanding membership diversity and engagement
2. Strengthening succession planning through board recruitment
3. Continuing advocacy for equitable patient access to dental and rehabilitative care
4. Building funding streams to sustain research and international collaboration grants

Our Society remains committed to promoting excellence, equity, and innovation in head and neck cancer care, and I look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Dr Julia Crawford
President, ANZHNCS