



**NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION
OF GENERAL SURGEONS**

Promoting Surgical Excellence

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2020**

Introduction

In November 2016 NZAGS Executive held a summit to update and revise the NZAGS Strategic Plan for 2017 - 2020, especially in light of the announced change to the MOU/SLA with the RACS. The new Partnering Agreement (replacing the MOU/SLA) provides new options for the development and delivery of training for NZAGS.

- a) Allows NZAGS more autonomy in the administration of our training programme
- b) Allows for NZAGS to be recognised as a legal entity as opposed to a 'regional sub-committee' of GSA.

NZAGS Executive met for a one day working session to evaluate the previous three years strategic plan, identify ongoing issues relating to general surgery, and to highlight any new developments, with a view to proposing possible actions to address these issues.

The strategic plan has now been updated and summarises the ongoing and new strategic issues and briefly lists action steps be considered to address the key issues.

This is intended very much as a summary and action document.

Aims and Objectives of the Association (as per Constitution)

- a) To promote and represent the practice of General Surgery and associated specialties in New Zealand
- b) To promote a forum for all General Surgeons to discuss and comment on matters affecting their practice.
- c) To promote activities that provides for continuing education, peer review and research in General Surgery.
- d) To aid the selection and training of medical practitioners in the specialty of General Surgery.
- e) To promote the Continuing Professional Development of General Surgeons.
- f) To be closely associated with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and its New Zealand National Board.
- g) To ensure the contracted private hospital or contract work with insurance companies or other Government bodies maintains the best interests of surgeons, patients and the community.
- h) To undertake any work which may appear to the Association to be in accordance with the above aims and to do such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above aims.

Strategic Issues

1. Branding, Image, Promotion of NZAGS

The NZAGS will position itself as the representative organisation for general surgeons and general surgery in New Zealand and promote this image positively to its members (including trainees), potential members and the health sector.

- General Surgery is a specialty – “specialist general surgery”
- General Surgery encompasses emergency, cancer and symptomatic surgery, primarily of the abdomen, breast, and endocrine glands.
- General Surgery includes the coverage provided for other subspecialties, such as neuro-trauma, cardiothoracic trauma and burns
- General Surgery forms the core function of a surgical hospital

Actions

- Promote NZAGS positively to trainees in general surgery at training days, meetings and via email/newsletters
- Ensure there is a clear separation of NZAGS and RACS in terms of information delivery, trainee administration and engagement with other health professionals
- Revisit current NZAGS logo for appropriateness of use and branding criteria, including the association’s name.
- Utilise NZAGS logo on all communications to the health sector including members, trainees and potential members.

- Prepare a regular newsletter, including the President's Update, to be circulated to members, potential members, and trainees.
- Consider developing a PR programme to enhance awareness of NZAGS, and position it as the organisation representing specialist general surgery, as well as the training body for the speciality.
- Maintain links with key health sector organisations (see Section 6 below)
- Maintain links with sister organisations and sub-specialty general surgical groups

2. Governance

The structure of the Association will reflect a vibrant, visible, authoritative organisation fully representative of the different sectors within general surgery.

- The structure and functioning of NZAGS must reflect the image and branding of the Association
- The NZAGS Constitution will form the functioning document underlying governance of the Association
- Differentiation between RACS and NZAGS needs to be reflected in the governance of NZAGS
- RACS Boards need to recognise NZAGS as a separate legal entity from that of GSA.

Actions

- Restructure the NZAGS Executive to ensure there is representation from
 - Urban and Rural Surgery
 - Private and public surgeons
 - Women in surgery and young surgeons
 - Subspecialties
 - Trainees
- Ensure NZAGS is not treated as a regional sub-committee of GSA but a separate legal entity
- Any training systems must be clearly branded NZAGS
- Ensure Executive direction is focussed on key NZAGS activities which will aid in defining NZAGS separate from RACS especially in Training, CPD and Branding
- Future staffing and administrative structures of the Association must also reflect the governance principles and key activities outlined in this plan
- Ensure the Constitution is also aligned to the governance principles
- Ensure all Executive Committee members are aware of their responsibilities and NZAGS Policy documents

3. Education and Training

The NZAGS is the provider of training for specialist general surgery and will ensure there is high quality general surgical service available throughout New Zealand appropriate to population demographics now and in the future.

- NZAGS is, and needs to be clearly seen as the training provider in general surgery (branding)
- NZAGS will meet its obligations to RACS as the training provider in specialist general surgery under the new Partnering Agreement to come into being 1 January 2014
- NZAGS will fully participate in standards setting, curriculum reviews, and hospital training post accreditation and credentialing in conjunction with RACS as is appropriate.
- Trainees are the future of NZAGS

Actions

- The NZAGS Training Committee to be formally recognised and promoted as the group responsible for the administration and delivery of training services in New Zealand for General Surgery. Including selection, curriculum review, training and hospital post accreditation for specialist general surgery.

The Committee responsibilities and functioning requires clear documentation and credibility.

- The new SET process to be clearly detailed to trainees and prospective trainees and NZAGS members to ensure administration of the trainees through SET is a smooth seamless and rewarding process.
- NZAGS to ensure all trainees experience rotation to a rural position.
- NZAGS to facilitate formal links between larger and nearby smaller centres.
- As part of overall branding, NZAGS encourages high quality candidates to apply and participate in specialist general surgical training.
- NZAGS Training Committee to set up a mentoring partner for each trainee for the duration for training.
- NZAGS Executive Committee will review the provision of resources to support the full administration of the training activity including selection, records and all support functions. This may mean these activities will be devolved from RACS to NZAGS.
- Ensure (with RACS Board in General Surgery) that the Specialist General Surgery curriculum is relevant to current general surgical practice (acute and non acute) in New Zealand
- The NZAGS Training Committee is accountable to the NZAGS Executive for budgetary spend approval over \$20,000.

4. Workforce

The provision and broad overview of specialist general surgery in New Zealand is fragmented and is often not recognised as a specialty.

- NZAGS must take a leadership and governance role in workforce issues relating to the provision of specialist general surgical services.
- NZAGS will take a proactive role in encouraging trainees to continue as specialist general surgeons and ensure there is an attractive work environment for this speciality in all centres but with particular emphasis on rural centres.
- NZAGS will ensure all trainees and members have a process for ascertaining workforce landscape within NZ

Actions

- NZAGS will ensure the ability for DHB's and hospitals to advertise vacancies, locum and permanent, and future surgeon requirements etc on the NZAGS website.
- NZAGS will approach the Government with a list of requirements needed to support provincial centres.
- Retirement Mechanism. Perhaps a 'planning for retirement' process could be developed, agreed by members and suggested to DHB's regarding a 5 year plan to retirement. i.e. If a surgeon asks to come off the acute roster, they are signalling that within 5 years they will retire.
- NZAGS will develop scenarios to be used to lobby and promote an attractive working environment for specialist general surgeons (urban and rural) looking at issues such as rostering, remuneration etc See Section 7 below)
- NZAGS will facilitate "part time" working and establish a "back to the workforce" programme with the creation of surgical fellowship positions for those wanting "refresher" time in general surgery
- NZAGS will make presentations to trainees at Training days to create awareness of the Association and "promote" aspects of working as a specialist general surgeon
- NZAGS will facilitate support and mentoring linkages between smaller and larger surgical units for purposes of peer support, CPD, training etc.
- At Trainee days look at obtaining speakers from smaller hospitals so that they can discuss the benefits with trainees of working in a smaller centre.

5. Continuing Professional Development

The NZAGS will foster the ideal of specialist general surgeons maintaining the highest standard of professional competence

- Participation in CPD is a RACS requirement for continuation of 'fellowship' and is also a requirement set by the Medical Council of New Zealand for the issuing of an Annual Practising Certificate.
- NZAGS needs to be proactive in promotion of CPD by facilitating participation in the programme and ensuring it is relevant to specialist general surgery

- NZAGS for a future role in “promoting” participation in CPD to trainees so that it is recognised as an ongoing accepted activity throughout their careers

Actions

- NZAGS to take “ownership” of the CPD programme for general surgery.
- Review current RACS CPD programme for its relevance to general surgery and develop enhancements such as practice visits if deemed appropriate
- Monitor participation in the current programme and assist “outliers” to meet their CPD requirements
- Promote attendance at appropriate scientific meetings as a means of maintaining clinical knowledge
- Review structure, content and locations of the NZAGS Annual Meeting to ensure its relevance to subspecialties, private surgeons, small/large centre surgeons and its relationship with CPD
- Liaise with the Medical Council of New Zealand to ensure the NZAGS CPD programme more than meets the minimally accepted standards for CPD
- Consider establishing a specific NZAGS CPD programme as a web based programme with easy data capture and entry
- Arrange to have a regular “update” presentation on general surgical research at the NZAGS Annual Meeting.

6. Relationships

Good relationships with a wide range of organisations, mostly within the health sector, are vital to an organisation that wishes to position itself as the pinnacle organisation representing specialist general surgery in New Zealand.

- Developing sound and mutually beneficial relationships is a vital part of the branding process, necessary for NZAGS to achieve its key objectives.
- Developing an ongoing consistent interaction/meetings with health insurance companies and ACC
- Good relationships with allied organisations and the health sector generally can be promoted as a membership benefit, especially if these relationships can influence the development of general surgery and/or resolution of issues
- Good relationships encourage consultation especially in areas of health policy development.

Actions

- NZAGS will develop a key list of organisations/links and set up regular meetings accordingly. These will include RACS sections and groups, Allied Health Professional groups, hospital associations, Government and other health providers.
- NZAGS will continue to foster links with GSA in Australia and ASGBI in the UK. Visits to the respective Association Annual meetings will be encouraged.
- NZAGS will, primarily through the website, promote aspects of the Association and specialist general surgery to the community.
- The development of relationships/links will require resources and will become a key task for the Executive Director, assisted by the President.

7. Professional Employment Services

Employment packages including remuneration are vital for the attraction and retention of specialist general surgeons in both urban and rural centres.

- NZAGS has a clear role in advocating on behalf of members for appropriate employment packages to be provided wherever specialist general surgical services are provided.
- Significant discrepancies exist at present between urban/rural employment, collective contract versus individual, final year Trainee/first year consultants. NZAGS must address these discrepancies and apply influence where changes are needed.
- Innovative employment strategies need to be developed and promoted to DHB's by NZAGS.

Actions

- Review general employment conditions
- Devise options for packages to be promoted to DHB's to be offered to rural centre surgeons
- Ensure family and educational and lifestyle needs are considered in all employment arrangements
- Ensure quality and standards are integral with the employment package, especially the ability of the employer to provide roster cover, meet "safe hours of work" limits etc