

Minutes of NZAGS Executive 26th March 2021
held 9am Bartlett Lounge, Taranaki Base Hospital

Present: Rowan French, Bronwen Evans, Nigel Henderson, Peter Shapkov, Alex Popadich, Mark Stewart, Dave Moss, Vanessa Blair, Andrew Moot, Gowan Creamer, Bevan Jenkins, Simon Bann, Sarah Abbott, Jasen Ly, Claire Nicoll

1. Apologies: Julian Speight

2. Minutes of last meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting held via Zoom on 23 February 2021 were approved as being a true and accurate record by Nigel Henderson and seconded by Peter Shapkov.

3. Matters Arising:

3.1 ANZELA QI – Gowan reported that significant funding is required to match that provided by Australia. The Executive agreed to support a request of Ministry of Health to achieve this and to ensure the risk calculations are contextual for New Zealand.

3.2 Practice Visits – There is still the issue of disparity between the 3 years CPD points awarded to Gynaecology consultants participating in their programme, and the 1 year offered by RACS. Several approaches were discussed. There is concern that Practice Visits are not valued as CPD by one member of PDSB and that that is influencing RACS stance on awarding CPD. An alternative approach in the future is to look at running our own CPD Programme.

Action Points: Gowan offered to look at the programme to see if the points could be spread over 2 CPD reporting periods. Bronwen is to approach MCNZ to see whether they can provide an opinion on the worth of the CPD points.

3.3 Salutation- there has been no response to Rowan's letter to date. The NZAGS website has been set with no default – members need to add in their preferred salutation. Bronwen noted that the issue was caused by a change to a Plug-in used by our website developer and that in future she will be checking for any unintentionally changes to mitigate against further problems. It was noted that PDSB recently discussed whether RACS should be adopted a universal salutation of Dr but no consensus was reached.

4. Reports

4.1 President- Referred to his report in the Annual Report. Tabled as read. Everything to be covered under other items

4.2 Executive Director/Secretary – Referred to her report in the Annual Report. Tabled as read. Bronwen thanked Nigel Henderson for pulling together an amazing ASM and reported that there have been 200 registrations – the highest in the past decade.

4.3 Treasurer – Alex reported that the primary differences in the financial situation in 2020 compared to 2019 is the lack of a conference last year and increased expenditure on IT.

4.4 Training – Refer to David and Simon’s reports in the Annual Report. Tabled as read. Simon reported that he had given a presentation to all the supervisors regarding the new GSET Programme at the Training Committee meeting the previous day. There was much discussion on the response from Spencer Beasley to Trainee concerns over the planned barriers study which had been cancelled as a result. The primary concern was over the questionnaire sent to trainees prior to the study commencing. The approach agreed was that the questionnaire would be reframed, that independent review of the wording would be undertaken. Trainees would be asked if they were happy to proceed. Possibly seek approval from Spencer Beasley.

Action points: Claire to get redrafted questionnaire and get review. S Bann to write to Spencer regarding new approach.

5. Business items

5.1 Strategy update –several themes were discussed to focus on in the future. These including looking at whether NZAGS should be involved in the support of charity hospitals in any way, a review of the advocacy NZAGS is involved in especially regarding the current postcode lottery for access to surgery and the role CPAC in this. Should NZAGS be writing to the Minister of Health regarding these issues? Should NZAGS be involved more with assisting new Fellows secure employment in NZ – how can we find out where vacancies may arise from consultant retirement.

5.2 RACS Alcohol Policy – the executive discussed whether to adopt this policy which was viewed as rather prescriptive. It was agreed that Claire would provide an NZAGS version based on the better parts of the RACS one.

Action Points: Claire to draft an NZAGS alcohol policy

5.3 Developing an NZAGS cultural policy – Bronwen has asked for help getting this started – Maxine Ronald has offered to help but is not a member. It was approved that Maxine would be given "Honorary Member" Status for 2 years and co-opted onto the Executive to assist with this if she is still keen. It was agreed that whilst the primary focus is Māori cultural representation, it was important not to lose sight of other cultures.

Action points: Bronwen to provide list of what is needed. Rowan to call Maxine to ask for her assistance.

5.4 Membership fee. The Executive approved an increase to the Membership Fee of 1.8% in line with CPI to be presented at the AGM tomorrow. Membership rises from \$540pa including GST to \$550pa including GST from 28 March 2021.

5.5 Management Report – the Executive noted the report which is provided for each meeting as required by the auditors. Bronwen noted that the change of auditors away from Deloitte has been excellent and a much quicker and less stressful experience than previous years.

5.6 Overseas travel – The Executive discussed recommendations for staff and committee members invited to attend RACS and other meeting overseas if a covid travel bubble opens up. The main concern is employees and members being stuck overseas or in isolation in the event of further lockdowns. It was agreed that neither staff, nor members, should travel until they are

vaccinated. The risk of being unable to return must be assessed before any travel is undertaken. The Executive Director will have to approve all staff international travel before it is undertaken on behalf of NZAGS. This stance will be reviewed regularly whilst the pandemic persists.

5.7 Complementary meals for supervisors and Executive members – the cost of providing complementary meals has gone up, it is recognised that supervisors provide considerable amount of time pro bono in their roles and we do want them to feel valued. In the past supervisors were not welcome to attend the Trainee Dinner but that has changed in the past few years. It was agreed that complementary meals could still be provided, but we need to make sure trainees are still happy for their dinner to be attended by supervisors. The Executive agreed that Bronwen could issue complementary meals at the ASM for those making exceptional contributions to NZAGS.

Action points: Trainee rep to be asked to poll trainees on their opinion of supervisor attendance at the trainee dinner.

5.8 Southern Cross - Jojo and Emma from Southern Cross attended the meeting at this point. **Engagement** – Executive members noted that they have been concerned to discover SX pilots suggested by outfits with commercial interest which might not be in the best interest for SX members. Some of these are looking at new models of care, for example co-location of surgeon/pathology/radiology to one appointment for a patient to shorten the referral/consultation process, and also tumour histology profiling to inform the use of chemotherapy. This is leading to inequalities of service for some members in more provincial areas. SX was asked to seek support for pilots direct from NZAGS and other appropriate specialty groups instead. It was agreed that NZAGS and SX should meet virtually quarterly to discuss issues and share information. Vanessa Blair noted that she has been very impressed that SX has focused on audit and quality. Emma advised that the new pathways for care are looking at cost sustainability models and looking at evidence-based outcomes for procedures where non-surgical management is comparable to surgical procedures. However, the affiliated provider scheme will be retained.

Jojo talked about work that SX is doing to identify outliers and provided some graphs showing billing by individual surgeons for all procedures across 1 year, noting that all costs are included in the data points, not just the surgeon's fee. It was noted that some specialties are actively involved in moderating outlier situations, whilst others do not want that responsibility. It was noted that the format of the graphs needed more explanation and that the disparity of the terminology by surgeons and SX as to the level of data.

There is an intention to progress the Breast contracts that were signalled a while ago. There are some planned changes to coding but SX needs to get coding IT project approved to start that so the review of Breast contracts is not likely to commence until end of 2022 at the earliest.

Hernias are an increasing concern as ACC seems to be auto-rejecting more claims rather than have them scrutinised by a clinician. SX recently represented a group of members who had been denied cover by ACC at review, and won the case. SXs looking at approving surgery for hernias before claim is accepted and then seeking reimbursement from ACC if required so that patients can get back to work etc faster. SX would like a representative from NZAGS to advise regarding hernias.

Action points: Bronwen to identify willing representative for hernias and inform SX.

9. Policies

The suggested changes were all approved with the following exceptions: -

Delegation Manual – an increase in the GM delegation from \$10,000 to \$20,000 is approved with the condition that only 2 payments in this magnitude per year are allowable, and this will apply to the ED and Treasurer.

Acute Services – sort out typo

Membership – add in honorary membership – to be brought back for approval

Survey requests – to be redrafted to include triage process for circulation or putting on website – to be brought back

Action points: Claire to redraft where necessary and return for approval

6. Other business

6.1 SOLA project

Claire informed the Executive that the new SOLA functionality has been built just within budget. The plan now is to trail in 5 hospitals to determine any bugs and small fixes needed. Also, there was no budget set aside for developing improved views required for admin. Given how much information is now collected for each trainee it is vital Helen can be given a "spreadsheet view" of all trainees. It is likely that the scoping for this work will necessitate further budget later this year.

6.2 **New Board members** – Bronwen to find out what vacancies there will be – two members of Executive who were not present to ascertain interest in remaining on the Executive. There were several names mentioned of those keen to be part of Executive.

Action points: Bronwen to follow up with suggested nominees

6.3 **Staff salaries** – Bronwen and Claire left the room for this discussion.

The Executive agreed to increase staff salaries by 3.3% which acknowledges the increase in CPI for the past 2 years as no salary review occurred in 2020. The increase will be effect from 1st April 2021.

6.4 Proposed 2021 meeting dates

The Executive approved the proposed dates.

Meeting	<i>Proposed Dates</i>	Proposed Time	Where
Zoom	Tuesday, 15 th June 2021	7.30pm	Zoom
Zoom	Tuesday, 14 th September 2021	7.30pm	Zoom
Zoom/Face to Face	Tuesday 16 th November 2021	?	Wellington\Zoom
Zoom	Tuesday, 22nd February 2022	7.30pm	Zoom

Face To Face	Friday, 1 st April 2022	9.00am	Wellington RACS Boardroom
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Meeting finished 1.25pm

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