
RACGP highlights of the year



Timeline

Date	Highlight	Description
3 July 2018	Announcement of 2018–20 President	Dr Harry Nespolon, a Sydney-based GP and practice owner, was announced President-elect.
9 August 2018	Launch of the <i>Standards for after-hours and medical deputising services</i>	The Standards aim to improve the quality and safety of after-hours health services. The Department of Health made changes to urgent after-hours items as a result of RACGP advocacy.
27 August 2018	Inaugural RACGP Practice Owners National Conference	The conference addressed specific needs of practice owners and business managers through education, professional development and information updates. The success of the conference was confirmed by the attendance of more than 450 delegates.
28 August 2018	Launch of <i>Guideline for the management of knee and hip osteoarthritis</i>	The guideline reflects changing evidence in treatment for osteoarthritis, including reducing overreliance on measures such as surgery, imaging technology and medication, and was approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council.
29 August 2018	Adoption of the RACGP Environmental and Social Governance Investment Policy	The policy outlines how the RACGP plans to carry out investments with consideration for ethical, environmental, corporate governance and social issues.
19 September 2018	Launch of <i>General Practice: Health of the Nation</i> report	For the second year, the RACGP compiled its annual health check-up on general practice, showing the areas where Australia's primary healthcare system continues to thrive, while also highlighting areas of concern.
5 October 2018	Launch of social media campaign #doctorsforasylumseekers	Together with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and Australian Medical Students' Association, the RACGP led the #doctorsforasylumseekers social media campaign to call on the federal government to act urgently to address the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia's offshore detention centres. The campaign received wide media coverage and increased awareness of health issues for asylum seekers.
18 January 2019	Launch of RACGP Practice Experience Program	The RACGP aims to ensure all doctors working in general practice in Australia have relevant training and hold GP qualifications, and that patients receive the best care possible. Funded by the federal government and in partnership with Regional Training Organisations and the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS), the new program is a self-directed education program designed to support non-vocationally registered doctors on their pathway to achieving RACGP Fellowship.

Date	Highlight	Description
2 February 2019	Launch of 'Become a GP' campaign	Targeted at medical students, the RACGP hopes to build interest in the general practice profession. 'Become a GP' highlights the clinical challenges of general practice, the opportunities to make a difference to patients and their communities, the supportive and passionate collegial network of GPs and, most importantly, the relationships we are able to form with our patients over a lifetime.
18 February 2019	RACGP President Dr Harry Nespolon appears at the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety	Dr Harry Nespolon told the Royal Commission that GPs don't receive enough support when treating patients in residential aged care facilities (RACFs), and that inadequate remuneration, communication breakdown and a lack of physical infrastructure in RACFs are further barriers to GPs providing onsite care.
26 February 2019	Australian GPs provide a 'house visit' for Queensland MPs	RACGP Queensland Chair, Dr Bruce Willett, and Registrar Representative, Dr Krystyna de Lange, took over Queensland Parliament to provide MPs with important health checks and reinforce the need for affordable and accessible GP visits, no matter how busy life may be.
13 March 2019	<i>Launch of Custodial health in Australia: Tips for providing healthcare to people in prison</i>	Developed by the RACGP Specific Interests Custodial Health network, the resource covers recommendations to best support patients for positive outcomes once released from prison, including prevention of suicide risk, substance abuse and self-harm.
April 2019	Launch of RACGP federal election campaign	The RACGP advocated strongly for members during the 2019 election campaign, highlighting the impact of the Medicare freezes from successive governments on patients' access to GPs. The campaign finished with an open letter from President Dr Harry Nespolon that asked key political figures: 'Who will care for all Australians?'
April 2019	The RACGP takes responsibility for training of GP candidates under the Australian General Practice Training Program	The RACGP signed a contract with the Department of Health to be the responsible entity for delivery of the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program and the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS). This was an historic moment for general practice and reflects the professionalism and expertise of the RACGP.
18–19 May 2019	RACGP Practice Owners National Conference	Following the success of the 2018 Practice Owners National Conference, the 2019 conference was held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney, hosting more than 720 delegates from across Australia.

Awards and GP honours

Rose-Hunt Award 2018

Dr Evan Ackermann, Queensland

For more than 10 years Dr Evan Ackermann has been an invaluable asset to the RACGP, where he has been highly respected for his energetic leadership as Chair of the RACGP Expert Committee – Quality Care (REC-QC) and as a member of the RACGP Queensland Faculty Board.

Dr Ackermann is a prominent and passionate advocate for the RACGP, the general practice profession and, more broadly, high-quality healthcare for Australians. His advocacy is grounded in evidence and the practical reality of general practice.

Dr Ackermann has continually demonstrated exceptional leadership and has been instrumental in contributing to and shaping RACGP policy and advocacy during his time as Chair of the REC-QC. He has been instrumental in many RACGP initiatives – in particular, in his work developing the RACGP's prescribing drugs of dependence in general practice series and ongoing development of the *Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice* (Red Book). His knowledge and expertise in the area of pain management and opioids were critical during the 2017–18 codeine change in Australia, and he was essential in informing Australian patients through the media on the importance of ongoing and sustainable pain management through general practice.

Dr Ackermann has been a consistently reliable, willing and confident spokesperson for the RACGP on a range of health issues. He has been interviewed, or provided media speaking points for other RACGP spokespeople, on important issues including influenza vaccinations, pharmacy, antibiotics use in general practice,

The RACGP salutes the dedication of GPs across Australia and recognises excellence in general practice with awards for the year's best GP, supervisor, registrar, general practice, rural GP, and rural registrar, as well as the Rose-Hunt Award, the RACGP's highest accolade.

long-acting reversible contraceptives, medicinal cannabis, and the risks around expanding primary care services in pharmacies.

Dr Ackermann's peers describe him as having an incredible energy and capacity despite working full time in practice. They recognise the time he takes to lead numerous quality initiatives in areas such as drugs of dependence, imaging and clinical indicators. Dr Ackermann has made a significant contribution to supporting growth and change within general practice.

Honorary Fellowship 2018

Dr Kerry Hancock, South Australia

Dr Kerry Hancock's exemplary training of generations of medical students and general practice registrars over the past 30 years highlights her valuable role within the general practice profession and the RACGP.



Known for her expertise in community management of asthma, Dr Hancock has dedicated countless hours to upskill the GPs of Australia in asthma management through her work on the Asthma Council, National Asthma Plans and more recently as Chair of the RACGP Specific Interests Respiratory Medicine network. Dr Hancock has played a significant role in writing asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) management guidelines, as well as in her work for the Asthma Council.

Dr Hancock's commitment and involvement in the broader general practice community warrants special recognition, upholding to perfection the aims and objectives of the RACGP through continuous improvement, forward thinking and the pursuit of highest quality in general practice. Dr Hancock is an executive member, Coordinating Committee COPD National Program, Lung Foundation Australia; member, GP Asthma Group, National Asthma Council; and Board member, Asthma Foundation SA.

Dr Hancock is one of two original founders of Chandlers Hill Surgery, Happy Valley, South Australia, where she has been at the forefront of innovative practice management such as early adoption of practice nurses and eHealth.

Going above and beyond in her care not only for patients but also for medical students, Dr Hancock is heavily involved with medical student teaching in Adelaide. In her surgery she is considered a role model, mentoring doctors and nurses, supervising medical students, and willingly providing advice and education.

Honorary Membership 2018

Mr Alan Brown, Victoria

Mr Alan Brown led RACGP efforts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in his role as Manager of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit between 2006 and 2009. He is a well-respected Gunditjamara Elder who has been critical in building trust between Aboriginal individuals and organisations and the RACGP over the past 30 years.



Above: Dr Graham Embleton, RACGP Corlis Award winner

Top right: Dr William Sands, RACGP General Practitioner of the Year

Bottom right: Dr Simon Morgan, RACGP Corlis Award winner

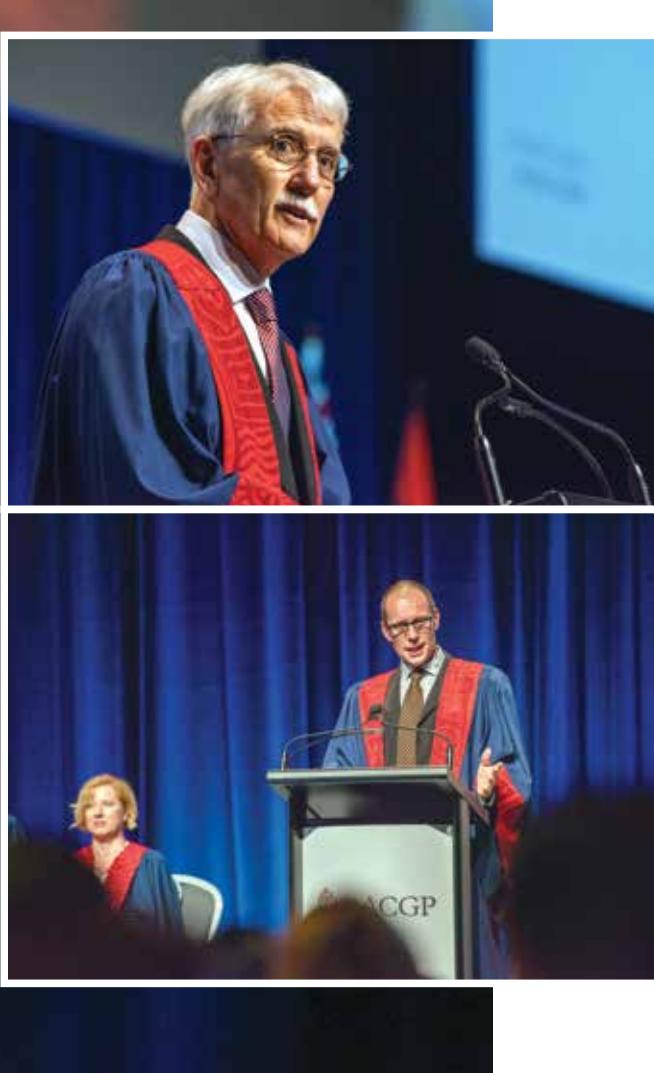
Mr Brown has played an active role as community representative on the RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council, promoting the RACGP and its initiatives in this key area of health. He has been essential to developing and implementing strategic and business plans, coordinating communications and to making funding applications.

Mr Brown has remained involved as a community representative on various committees, engaging roles with the RACGP and elsewhere that see him advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. He has assumed leadership and management roles in the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector at national and Victorian levels, and he continues to advocate for the RACGP,

supporting and guiding opportunities to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

During Mr Brown's time with RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, the Standing Strong Together Award was launched to recognise collaborations between GPs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RACGP also became a founding member of the Close the Gap Steering Committee and founding signatory to the Close the Gap statement of intent.

Mr Brown continues to represent the RACGP on steering and standing committees and advisory groups, including the Beyond Blue Impact of Discrimination Advisory Group, and is regularly sought as a subject matter expert. The RACGP's current position as a leader in Aboriginal and



Torres Strait Islander health is in no small part due to the early leadership and work of Mr Brown and his continued involvement.

Corlis Awards 2019

Dr Graham Emblen, Queensland

Dr Graham Emblen is recognised for his contribution to the RACGP over the past 25 years in general practice training locally, regionally and nationally, both directly and indirectly, in leadership roles, innovative processes and at policy levels.

Dr Emblen is described by his peers as an inspirational medical educator, providing enthusiastic support and willing to share his

knowledge, skills and reflections, encouraging and training many general practice registrars locally and beyond as they move towards their Fellowship.

The workshops delivered by Dr Emblen to fellow educators demonstrate his reflective manner, considered approach and continuing interest in education to ensure general practice doctors in training are taught by well-informed and highly trained educators.

Dr Emblen is an innovator and a reflective teacher who continually strives for educational excellence, collaborative sharing of knowledge and skills, and a dynamic approach when faced with change. His successful mentorship at all levels has led him to become a highly respected educator, held in esteem by his peers.

Dr Simon Morgan, New South Wales

Dr Simon Morgan is known for his superior work as a medical educator, his contributions to the field of medical research, his passion in the supervisor role of continuing professional development, and for his work as a GP.

Dr Morgan's many articles in journals such as *Australian Family Physician* (now *Australian Journal of General Practice*) on general practice registrars are highly regarded as core reading for medical educators and supervisors, and have been presented at medical conferences such GPEX 2017 in Adelaide.

Dr Morgan has contributed to the development of RACGP resources, most recently serving in the Advisory Group for the *Genomics in general practice* guide for GPs and healthcare professionals.

General Practitioner of the Year 2018

Dr William Sands, Western Australia

Dr William Sands is a highly respected West Australian GP who has cared for his Fremantle community for over 35 years, providing extraordinary care in GP obstetrics and elderly

care. Dr Sands provides a high level of dedication to patients in nursing homes, making frequent visits while continuing to provide the full spectrum of services as a GP.

Dr Sands has a deep clinical understanding with extensive knowledge of medical literature, and is committed to finding clinical answers. His peers define him as generous, perceptive and open minded, with a gentle demeanour but an extraordinary strength in character. He demonstrates superior clinical skills and a broad understanding of the role of general practice.

Within his practice, Dr Sands has created systems to efficiently manage chronic disease prevention, infection control, incident management and formal clinical meetings.

Dr Sands sees the teaching of future generations of GPs, both medical students and doctors in training, as an integral

part of being a GP. He plans his teaching engagements carefully to ensure content of high quality and considers appropriate methods to provide engaging and educative tutorials.

Dr Sands believes the RACGP is an essential professional representative body for GPs, and he has contributed to the college in many ways through examiner positions and acting on the RACGP WA faculty Board. He was a founding Board member of the Fremantle Division of General Practice.

In addition to his clinical contributions to his local area, Dr Sands has strong ties with his community as an active member of St Patrick's Basilica congregation, and by learning Italian to ensure he can treat the large number of Italian-speaking people living in Fremantle.



Clockwise from above:
Dr Holly Deer, RACGP Supervisor of the Year;
Medeco Inala, RACGP General Practice of the Year;
Dr Daniel Epstein, RACGP General Practice Registrar of the Year

General Practice Supervisor of the Year 2018

Dr Holly Deer, South Australia

Dr Holly Deer is a practising GP at Crystal Brook Medical Practice in South Australia and a valued trainer with experience at all levels of the AGPT Program. Described as comforting and supportive, and drawing from her passion for local community, Dr Deer has an innate ability to settle doctors in training into rural general practice.

Dr Deer's commitment to general practice has been evident since early in her career, when she obtained Fellowship of both the RACGP and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

Dr Deer is a strong advocate for good time management and for avoiding burnout, and gives doctors in training practical strategies they can apply in their own lives to improve their health and wellbeing. She has been an RACGP examiner, thereby further helping registrars navigate the final stages of their training to obtain Fellowship.

Dr Deer has demonstrated her passion for, and understanding of, health needs in her local community. Her approach to rural general practice is holistic. To ensure her patients always receive the best and most relevant care possible, Dr Deer fosters a love of learning and is always seeking ways to challenge and improve herself clinically. This approach benefits not only her patients but provides an invaluable example and experience for her doctors in training.

Dr Deer demonstrates collegial relationships with other staff, values safe practice and works hard to build an atmosphere of trust within Crystal Brook Medical Practice.

General Practice Registrar of the Year 2018

Dr Daniel Epstein, Victoria

Dr Daniel Epstein is committed to a future career in the field of general practice, with particular interests in preventive and primary healthcare innovation and health economics.

Having grown up in regional Victoria in the Yarra Valley, Dr Epstein wishes to continue his practice to benefit rural and remote communities through a John Flynn Rural Health Scholarship and spending time in Aboriginal communities.

Dr Epstein has a polite, respectful and holistic approach with his patients, and routinely seeks the advice of senior clinicians when required. He is a safe practising registrar with excellent applied clinical knowledge. He continually strives for self-improvement, pursues ongoing learning, and brings enthusiasm and passion to all aspects of the profession.

After completing a research project on alternative payment system economic modelling for more sustainable primary health access for marginalised populations, Dr Epstein was accepted as an RACGP academic registrar, and is working in education at Monash University with fourth-year medical students in their general practice term.

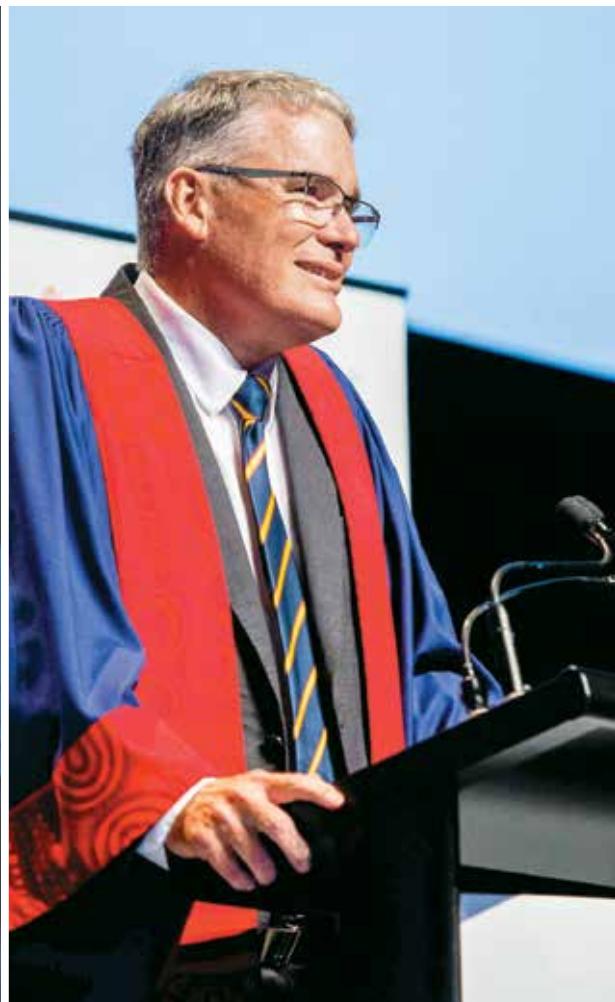
Already recognised as an up-and-coming leader in the field of innovation and creative problem solving in primary health, Dr Epstein is the founder and director of a primary health education company that produces Vaxcards – a collectible card game that acts as education and reward during the vaccination period for children, who can collect character cards belonging to the diseases being inoculated against. He successfully crowdfunded this project in 2017, raising over \$30,000. The game is now being played in 25 countries, and featured in an article in *The Lancet* in 2017. It has won a number of awards, and is currently being piloted in community vaccination clinics in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

General Practice of the Year 2018

Medeco Inala, Queensland

Medeco Inala is a general practice dedicated to innovation and ongoing improvement in delivering medical care in a low socioeconomic area – an area challenged by high rates of substance abuse, social disadvantage and a sense of disenfranchisement. Medeco Inala

Below: Rose-Hunt Award
winner Dr Evan Ackermann
(right) with RACGP President
Dr Harry Nespolon



is proud of Inala's working class, blue collar roots, and shares a sense of community with its patients.

Medeco Inala doctors reach out to the community, speaking at community-based events such as Liver Life, and making culturally sensitive presentations for the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Samoan communities.

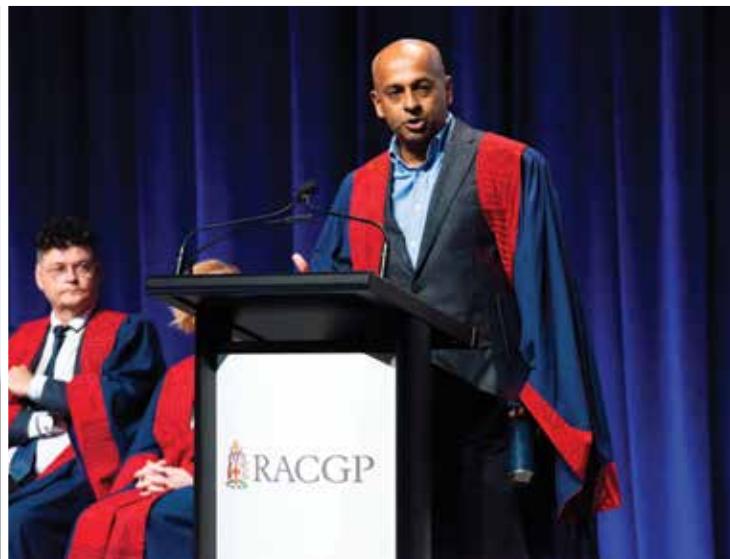
Care and compassion is delivered from the administrative team all the way through to the doctors and nurses. The Medeco Inala team understand the importance of interpersonal relationships with patients and that sometimes a cuppa and empathetic shoulder to cry on works more wonders than any medical expertise.

All Medeco Inala staff deliver their brand of positivity, enthusiasm and passion. Having a happy team has led to better outcomes in many ways. The high morale has, for example, ensured

a united front in the fight against the many adversities seen in the suburb of Inala.

Medeco Inala's crusade against hepatitis C has been an immense success and serves as a model for other Queensland practices. The clinic is working with Logan Hospital to launch an innovative mass screening of every emergency department patient that attends, testing for hepatitis C. Positively diagnosed people will then be channelled into the Medeco Inala practice or the Hepatitis C Kombi Clinic for cure.

The clinic's hepatitis C eradication project has also shown young doctors that primary care is an ideal setting in which to launch ambitious projects. The practice has contributed to the training of registrars and medical students since 2006. Education is a passion for the staff of Medeco Inala, and they hope to educate a new generation to the rewards that working in a disadvantaged area can bring to medical life.



Dr Kishan Pandithage,
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Health
– Standing Strong
Together Award winner

RACGP Rural Brian Williams Award 2018

Dr Stewart Jackson, Queensland

Dr Stewart Jackson has been a GP in Ingham, North Queensland for 22 years. This long-term service to his community has equipped him with unique expertise and knowledge that he shares generously in his daily work while mentoring his colleagues and practice staff. This results in an excellent level of care and efficient use of practice resources.

Dr Jackson has a deep understanding of social disadvantage, behaviour change, addiction medicine, persistent pain, aged care and palliative care. His positive and supportive approach encourages educational conversations with his peers, doctors in training and practice staff on the more challenging aspects of primary care, contributing to better outcomes for patients.

Doctors in training in Dr Jackson's practice comment on his leadership and guidance during their transition into a rural general practice setting. Dr Jackson's approachability and guidance create a safe and supportive environment, thus addressing one of the main barriers for doctors in training undertaking rural work. The doctors in training suggested that the qualities exemplified by Dr Jackson could, if demonstrated in other practices, encourage more young GPs to work in rural areas.

As an avid swimmer and a coach for the local school and adult swim squad, Dr Jackson also leads by example in promoting good health. He can, with authenticity, convey the benefits of exercise to his patients.

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health – Growing Strong Award 2018

Dr Casey Kalsi, Queensland

Dr Casey Kalsi is a proud Aboriginal general practice doctor in training based in Brisbane. Despite being told by many, including her school teacher, that she wasn't smart enough and wouldn't be more than a retail assistant, Dr Kalsi worked hard at school, attended university and became a teacher. She went on to medical school and is now close to completing her general practice training.

According to Dr Kalsi, practising medicine is not a right but a privilege. The resilience of her patients and community members inspires her to be the best GP she can be.

Dr Kalsi looks forward to a rewarding career in general practice where she will be able to work closely with her mob to help close the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health – Standing Strong Together Award 2018

Dr Kishan Pandithage, Northern Territory

Indigenous health workforce parity is essential in achieving health equality between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Dr Kishan Pandithage received the 2018 Standing Strong Together Award for working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in training, Fellows and organisations such as the Indigenous General Practice Registrar Network (IGPRN) to help grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GP workforce.

Dr Pandithage is a GP, medical educator and general practice supervisor who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors as they work towards Fellowship. The RACGP received overwhelming support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellows and members, recognising him for his dedication in establishing and maintaining strong connections with doctors undertaking general practice training.

A strong ally in building and strengthening the Indigenous GP workforce and the communities doctors serve, Dr Pandithage's commitment to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors is widely recognised.

Other award recipients

Monty Kent-Hughes Memorial Medals

2017.2 – Dr Jacob Mackenzie, South Australia

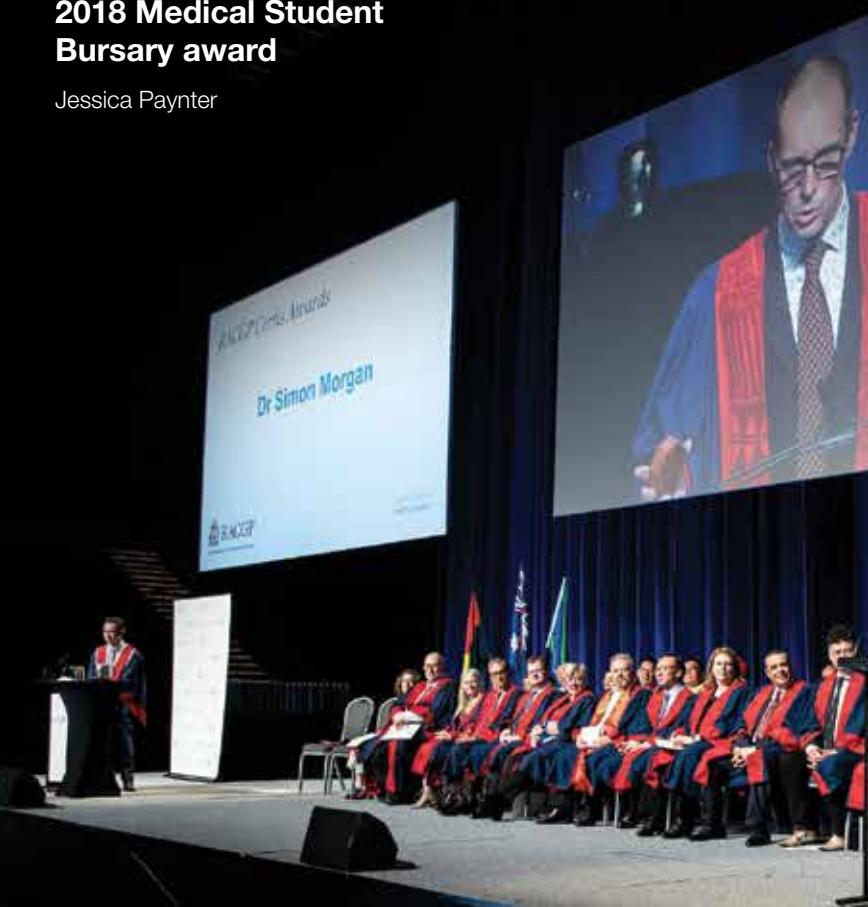
2018.1 – Dr Hiba Gundru, Queensland

Rural Registrar of the Year

Dr Kate Fox (WA)

2018 Medical Student Bursary award

Jessica Paynter

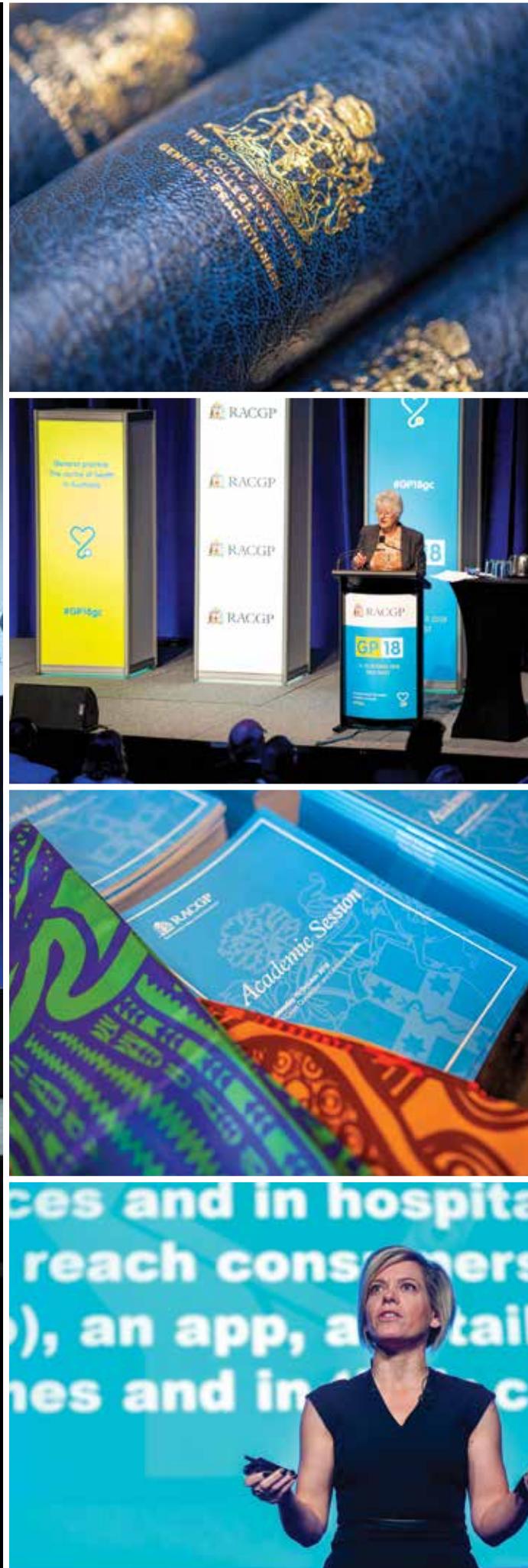




Above: Dr Simon Morgan accepts the RACGP Corlett Award

Above right: GP18 keynote speaker, Professor Felicity Goodyear-Smith

Bottom right: National Practice Owners Conference 2019 keynote speaker, Dr Louise Schaper



Top: RACGP new Fellows at GP18 Fellowship and Awards Ceremony
Middle: Associate Professor Ruth McNair
Bottom: RACGP Board members



National honours – RACGP members

Australia Day Honours

Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia

Professor Neil Spike (Vic)

Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division

Dr Venny Armando (NSW)

Dr Phillip Brownlie (NSW)

Dr Eleanor Chew (Qld)

Dr Peter Davidson (NSW)

Dr Craig Hassed (Vic)

Dr Stephen Howle (NSW)

Dr Peter Marendy (Qld)

Dr Robert Marr (NSW)

Emeritus Professor John Murtagh AO (Vic)

Dr Gregory Thompson (Qld)

Dr Robert Wight (SA)

Queen's Birthday Honours

Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia

Dr Jennifer Kendrick (NSW)

Associate Professor Ruth McNair (Vic)

Emeritus Professor Anthony Radford (SA)

Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division

Dr Michelle Crockett (NSW)

Dr Geraldine Duncan (NSW)

Dr Hector Faulkner (WA)

Dr Sam Heard (NT)

Dr Milton Sales (NSW)

Dr Tony Trachtenberg (NSW)

Dr Adam Zagorski (Vic)

National events

Overview of the change to conference structure

The structure of the RACGP national conferences will transition over the coming years to multiple events rather than a single major event. The aim of this is to provide targeted education and professional development that is specialised to members' needs and the variety of interests that exist throughout the membership.

2018 Academic Session, Fellowship and Awards Ceremony

The 2018 National Academic Session, Fellowship and Awards Ceremony was held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre in Queensland on Wednesday 10 October 2018. The William Arnold Connelly Oration was presented by Dr Mark Miller, RACGP Censor-in-Chief and Chair of the RACGP Board of Censors and Board of Assessment, 2014–18. More than 200 new Fellows were presented at the ceremony.

GP18 – General practice: The centre of health in Australia

'General practice: The centre of health in Australia' was the theme for the RACGP's annual conference, GP18, held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on the Gold Coast on 11–13 October 2018. More than 2000 delegates attended, including 48 medical students, and the conference exhibition welcomed 124 organisations.

During the three-day conference delegates attended presentations by over 100 GPs, and on Wednesday 10 October, immediately prior to the conference, participated in 15 active learning module workshops.



Top: Delegates at GP18
Bottom: Practice Owners National Conference 2019 Committee (L-R): David Dahm, Assoc Prof Charlotte Hespe, Dr Harry Nespolon, Dr Louise Schaper, Dr Sean Stevens, Dr Prakash Appanna and Dr John Deery

2018 RACGP Practice Owners National Conference

The inaugural RACGP Practice Owners National Conference was held at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins on 25–26 August 2018. More than 450 delegates attended, and the conference exhibition welcomed 12 organisations. During the two-day conference, delegates attended presentations across two streams tailored for established practice owners and new and/or aspiring practice owners.

2019 RACGP Practice Owners National Conference

Following the overwhelming response to the inaugural conference, the 2019 RACGP Practice Owners National Conference was held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney on 18–19 May. More than 720 delegates attended and the conference exhibition welcomed 27 organisations. The program saw the introduction of a new stream for practice managers, in addition to presentations for established practice owners and new and/or aspiring practice owners.



Delegates at GP18