



2023

ANNUAL REPORT
1 January – 31 December

The 2023 Annual Report of the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GES) documents the Society's strategic activities and member accomplishments achieved against the backdrop of another extraordinary year. This report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023.

About GESA

GES sets, promotes and continuously improves the standards of practice, training and research in gastroenterology and hepatology in Australia.

Our Shared Purpose

Our ultimate goal is optimal gastrointestinal and liver health for all.

We exist to promote optimal health through prevention, control and treatment of gastrointestinal and liver disease in humans.

Our decisions are guided by excellence, equity, leadership and fellowship.

Working Together

We actively collaborate to ensure our clinical and research practices are world class.

We care deeply about our patients and continue to find innovative ways to benefit their wellbeing.

We seek to provide true fellowship and support to our members.

Be a part of the peak professional organisation for gut and liver health in Australia

Be a Member: Join GESA and be a part of Australia's largest community of health care professionals and researchers in the fields of gastroenterology and hepatology.

Be Active: Be part of our Board, faculties, networks or special interest groups, volunteer your expertise, join a committee or express your interest in supporting our many education activities.

Be Informed: Enjoy a range of publications, news updates, member-only emails and journals that keep you abreast of important developments in gastroenterology and hepatology.

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2022-2025 Strategic Plan

GESA as an organisation is focused on ensuring best outcomes for our community by dedicating our efforts towards the pillars of our society.

Our strategy over the next three years is to ensure actions within the strategic priorities achieve the goals we have outlined in each.

Service	Best Practice	Research	Education	Advocacy and Professional Affairs
<p>Goal: To understand and serve the needs and concerns of our members, patients and the community.</p> <p>Maintenance of a well governed organisation that is functional in delivering appropriate services to our membership and our community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering an annual meeting for the purpose of communication, education and research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ AGW ▶ Gut School ▶ Other educational and research meetings Maintaining our Board structure and regular review of its form and function. Ensuring a workforce to deliver service requirements for our membership and community. <p>Communication between Board and Committee structure with appropriate support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring a responsive organisation to needs of membership and patients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Through surveys and member participation Engaging directly with the membership and consumer groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Creation of a dedicated consumer group. 	<p>Goal: To support the highest standards in GI and Liver clinical practice.</p> <p>Lead and communicate evidence based clinical standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate reviews and implementation of clinical standards Communicate contemporary government and public health advice Support guideline creation and dissemination. <p>Participate in conjoint training and certification programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endoscopic conjoint committee Collaborate with other national bodies to ensure maintenance of evidence base <p>Reward best clinical standards by celebrating clinical excellence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical excellence award. 	<p>Goal: Promote, facilitate and fund high value investigator-initiated research conducted by our membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a forum for multidisciplinary collaboration to identify and address unmet needs in gastrointestinal/liver research and clinical practice. Facilitate the dissemination of current research. Through scientific programs as part of AGW and other research meetings Review and endorsement of research activities that have a bearing on clinical practice Reward excellence by awarding of research awards. <p>Fund appropriate research to improve health in our community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow independent review of research projects through the Research Committee Engage with major funding bodies to advocate for GI and Liver research Facilitate networks to empower research in Australia. <p>Evaluate the impact of GI and Liver research that is facilitated by GESA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research may be endorsed by GESA Research may acknowledge GESA due to funding. 	<p>Goal: Provide contemporary, evidence-based GI and Liver education and training tailored to our members, patients and community.</p> <p>Provide educational activities specific to our various stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large meeting format education such as conferences and seminar series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ AGW and other scientific meetings Specific craft group educational activities supported by GESA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ NETI – Endoscopic teaching and training ▶ GENIUS/EUS workshop Clinician teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Specialty areas and collaboration with other Clinical bodies (RACP, RACS etc) Consumer teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve health literacy of our consumer base, this could be specific to GI and Liver related issues or general community level <p>Teaching in challenging areas such as Rural and Remote, how to ensure training requirements in remote regional areas to maintain equity of access and training.</p>	<p>Goal: Represent our members, patients and community to all agencies to ensure we all provide high quality, equitable GI and Liver related healthcare.</p> <p>Partnering with appropriate agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government collaboration to ensure dialogue around health issues pertaining to GI and Liver Ensure GESA representatives on guidelines and clinically relevant committees Engagement with media to support our mission. <p>Representation of GESA through individual participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership involvement in NHMRC and MRFF to advocate for funding Membership of Advisory groups within government Membership within Industry Advisory Groups. <p>Focus on philanthropic connections to provide assistance with our vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of philanthropy to propagate advocacy for a cause Use of philanthropy as a funding source.

GESA Board of Directors



Professor Alex Boussioutas

President, MBBS, PhD, FRACP, AGAF, FGESA, GAICD

[full bio](#)



Dr Kirsty Campbell

MBBS, FRACP, FGESA

[full bio](#)



Fergus Gardiner

OAM, PhD

[full bio](#)



Associate Professor David Hewett

Chair, Research and Grants Committee, MBBS Hons, Qld, MSc, PhD,

FRACP

[full bio](#)



Professor Gerald Holtmann

Chair, Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee,

MD, PhD, MBA, FRACP, FRCP(UK), FAAHMS

[full bio](#)

GESA Board of Directors



Associate Professor John Lubel

Chair, Education Committee, BDS, FDSRCS(Eng), MBBS,
MRCP(UK), FRACP, PhD, FGESA

[full bio](#)



Dr Matthew Remedios

MBBS, FRACP, FGESA

[full bio](#)



Professor Alex Thompson

MBBS(Hons), PhD, FRACP, FAASLD, FGESA

[full bio](#)



Professor Nina Tirnitz-Parker

MSc, PhD, GAICD, FGESA

[full bio](#)



Associate Professor Amany Zekry

Chair, AGW Scientific Program Committee,

MBBS, PhD, FRACP

[full bio](#)

President's Report



Prof Alex Boussioutas

MBBS PhD FRACP AGAF FGESA GAICD
[full bio](#)

Reflecting on my first year of leading this Board and our society, I have found it to be an absolute honour and a privilege. It has been yet another positive and highly productive year for GESA.

The dedication and hard work of our Board, Faculties, Board Committees, and Networks have truly shone through in our service to GESA members, our patients, and the wider community. This annual report showcases all our activities, and I wholeheartedly encourage you to explore all of its detail.

Each Director has brought to their role a true commitment to our Society, and the camaraderie during our Board meetings has been nothing short of inspiring. We debated challenging issues head-on, engaging in spirited discussions while maintaining an atmosphere of inclusivity and respect. This collaborative spirit has been the backbone of our success.

All Board members have specific portfolios, alongside their board responsibilities of addressing finance, risk management and governance requirements. I personally thank them for their dedication and professionalism. Alex Thompson has been a valued President Elect, our financial growth and risk management has been overseen by Gerald Holtmann as Chair of Finance and Risk Committee. Nina Tirnitz-Parker has continued to keep us current with strategic governance issues.

Amany Zekry has embraced the role of chair of the Scientific Programme Committee with vigour and enthusiasm whilst navigating the many moving parts that must come together to ensure our AGW is on point. Matthew Remedios has skilfully managed our professional affairs, always responsive and directing requests to the most relevant people. David Hewett holds the research portfolio and has been instrumental in exploring what more we can do in this area, and John Lubel has embraced the education portfolio with both an innovative and expansive lens.

Kirsty Campbell continues to provide leadership to the Regional, Remote, and Indigenous Committee, along with ensuring our Gut School meets the needs of new trainees. We also welcome Fergus Gardiner, co-opted member to support and strengthen our advocacy strategy and activities, it is no surprise his portfolio is in advocacy.

The Board directed changes to our governance structures saw the implementation of our new faculties, including paediatric gastroenterology and gastrointestinal cancer. These faculties have embraced the opportunities to expand our offerings to members and to provide more targeted activities, advocacy and service to our members. I encourage you all to participate in activities promulgated by the Faculties, their activities; are the essence of who we are as a Society.

President's Report

The GESA Board's commitment to research remains steadfast, and this is demonstrated in our progress towards developing a GESA Research Strategy. We look forward to this work being finalised and continuing to enhance the profile of gastrointestinal and liver research.

As part of my Presidential term, I set out the objectives to focus on a promotion of career pathways. Towards this objective we have reached out to the British Gastroenterology Society and will be working towards harmonising fellowship positions across both organisation to make opportunities more transparent for our early career aspirations. I will continue to investigate academic, teaching, leadership and private practice pathways for our members. There is more work to do in this area and in the year ahead, I hope to see some very tangible outcomes.

The Society continues, to provide support for its members and their patients. Our position statements

and clinical guidance documents promoting optimal gastroenterology practice and management are used daily and there are more for release over the coming years.

The efforts and support of the GESA team are to be commended, as it is through their dedication and commitment that we are able to operationalize our aspirations to become realities for our membership to experience. On behalf of the Board, I thank GESA CEO, Jacquie O'Brien for her enthusiasm and drive and I also acknowledge the significant contribution of our Chief Operating Officer, Nick Catton, along with all of the other GESA team members for their support of me, the Board, and the membership.

More details of all of GESA's activities are contained in the following pages. It has been my great honour to act as President and I look forward to the year ahead being even more fruitful for our Society and for us all.

CEO's Report



Jacquie O'Brien

Chief Executive Officer

Dear GESA Members and Colleagues,

As we reflect on another remarkable year, I am honoured to be able to highlight key developments across 2023 for the annual report of the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA). This year has been marked by significant achievements and growth, reinforcing our position as a leading voice in gastroenterology and hepatology.

Membership and Engagement

Our society continues to thrive, with a membership now exceeding 1,100 professionals. This diverse community of gastroenterologists, hepatologists, and trainees forms the backbone of our organisation, driving innovation and excellence in patient care across Australia.

Educational Initiatives

Annual Scientific Meeting

The Australian Gastroenterology Week (AGW) 2023 was a resounding success, attracting over 1700 attendees. This flagship event showcased cutting-edge research and fostered valuable networking opportunities for our members.

Professional Development

We've expanded our educational offerings, delivering 12 webinars and 4 face-to-face courses throughout the year. These programs have been instrumental in keeping our members at the forefront of gastroenterological and hepatological advancements.

Our **Regional Remote and Indigenous (RRI)** program was evidence of a very positive start to our ongoing commitment to this initiative and we look forward to further growth in this area. A special thank you to all involved in this program and to our travelling professors who donated a week of their expertise to support the building of capabilities in the NT.

Research and Innovation

Research Funding

GESA has continued its commitment to advancing the field through research. In 2023, we awarded more than \$800,000 in research grants, including industry grants supporting critical studies that promise to shape the future of gastroenterology and hepatology.

CEO's Report

Advocacy and Guidelines

We have made substantial progress in advocating for our specialty and patients. GESA has actively contributed to 15 submissions to government and other bodies, ensuring our voice is heard in shaping healthcare policy. Additionally, we've updated several clinical practice guidelines, providing our members with the latest evidence-based recommendations for patient care.

Financial Health

I'm pleased to report that GESA remains in a strong financial position. Our prudent management has allowed us to invest in research while maintaining a solid foundation for future initiatives.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2024, GESA is well-positioned to continue its mission of advancing gastroenterology and hepatology in Australia. We will focus on expanding our educational programs, enhancing research opportunities, and strengthening our advocacy efforts.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff, committee members, and volunteers whose tireless efforts make our achievements possible. Your commitment to excellence and passion for improving patient care continue to inspire and drive our society forward.

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in GESA.

A complex network graph with numerous nodes (small dots) and connecting lines (edges) in a light blue color. The graph is dense and organic, with some nodes having multiple connections and others being more isolated. It serves as a background for the title text.

Committee Reports

GESA AGW Scientific Program Committee



To Sept 2023

John Lubel (Chair)
Vipul Aggarwal (Endoscopy)
Yoon-Kyo An (Young GESA and Intestinal Ultrasound)
Anil Kumar Asthana (Private Practice)
Rebecca Burgell (Neurogastroenterology and Motility)
Simon Ghaly (IBD)
Chris Hair (Sustainability)
Natalie Kiel (Private Practice)
Daniel Lightowler (GENCA)
Kate Lynch (Liver)
Avik Majumdar (Liver)
Kavitha Subramaniam (IBD)
Nikhil Thapar (Paediatric)
Vicki Whitehall (Research and Grants)
Fotini Bakas (GESA)
Loretta York (GESA)



From Sept 2023

Amany Zekry (Chair)
Vipul Aggarwal (Endoscopy)
Yoon An (Young GESA & IUS)
Rebecca Burgell (Luminal/General GE)
Richard Fernandes (Young GESA)
Enoka Gonsalkorala (Liver)
Saurabh Gupta (Endoscopy)
Sunil Gupta (GI Cancer)
Emma Halmos (Nutrition)
Georgina Hold (RGC)
Daniel Lightowler (GENCA / Nurses)
Ken Liu (Liver)
Tamara Mogilevski (IBD)
Nikhil Thapar (Paediatrics)
Emily Wright (IBD)
Fotini Bakas (GESA)

GESA AGW took place in Brisbane over 5 days, from Friday 1 to Tuesday 5 September, and included the Research Workshop and Postgraduate Course. The program reinforced its status as Australia's leading annual meeting in gastroenterology and hepatology. Attendees were treated to cutting-edge discoveries and innovations, presented by 19 prominent international experts in the field.

We sincerely thank the GESA AGW attendees, reaching just over 1,700, for their overwhelming support of this annual meeting. Attendees met with expert speakers from across the globe and nation. An additional thanks to our 111 national speakers, 66 session chairs and authors of 380 submitted abstracts, as well as our sponsors and exhibitors, who all made this event possible.

Program highlights

Crafted around the theme of 'Reaching for the stars: constellation of experts', the program featured lectures and presentations on the latest scientific and clinical developments in managing gastroenterological and liver conditions.

This year's program had a particular emphasis on nutrition and nursing, highlighting the importance of mutual learning and the sharing of ideas to aid patients' journeys to recovery and to achieve clinical

GESA AGW Scientific Program Committee

excellence in gastroenterology and hepatology. The program ultimately aimed to strengthen collaborative relationships between clinicians, nurses, researchers, patients and the industry.

In addition to the usual outstanding international and national guest speakers and state-of-the-art updates, sessions also featured rapid scientific advances in gastroenterology and hepatology, regional and remote health care and the challenges of private practice, including patients' perspectives, delivered by patients themselves.

Plenary Speakers

- Marla Dubinsky gave the Bushell Foundation Lecture, discussing precision to prevention in IBD
- Mark Oliver accepted the Outstanding Clinician Award
- Timothy Florin was awarded the Distinguished Researcher Prize
- Catherine Stedman continued a longstanding tradition between the two societies of Australia and New Zealand by presenting the Trans-Tasman lecture on Autoimmune Hepatitis.

GESA upheld its commitment to supporting and advancing research among its members through the ongoing Young Investigator Awards (YIA) session to encourage emerging researchers in the field.

Forty-one outstanding abstracts were offered free papers and woven throughout the program. The poster gallery returned in 2023 and were available for viewing in the AGW Exhibition Hall.

Most annual general meetings for the various organisations and faculties were held during GESA AGW 2023 this year.

A variety of sessions were covered by the media, with articles printed in the online health care news publication the limbic. Research Review Australia also published an independent conference review of GESA AGW 2023.

The GESA AGW Exhibition Hall was a one-stop opportunity to learn about the latest industry advances and updates on products, equipment and services. The Exhibition Hall featured a total of 48 supporters, 17 sponsors, 25 exhibitors and six not-for-profit organisations.

As I reflect on the success of AGW 2023, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Scientific Program Committee for their remarkable dedication and adaptability in delivering truly innovative program.

Their thoughtful planning allowed us to meet the diverse needs of our members and the broader gastroenterology community. This year's theme of 'bidirectional learning' was made possible by their meticulous planning and work.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the GESA members and our colleagues for

GESA AGW 2023 International Speakers Presented in person:

- Bushell Foundation Lecture (IBD): Marla Dubinsky (USA)
- Trans-Tasman Lecture: Catherine Stedman (NZ)
- Liver: Paolo Angeli (Italy)
- General GE: Dustin Carlson (USA)
- IUS: Noa Krugliak Cleveland (USA)
- Network: Ana Dugic (Germany)
- Liver: Gideon Hirschfield (UK)
- Liver: Phil Newsome (UK)
- GE Cancer: Kimmie Ng (USA)
- Liver: Mindie Nguyen (USA)
- IBD: David Rubin (Canada)
- IUS: Shintaro Sagami (Japan)
- General GE: Detlef Schuppan (Germany)
- Paediatrics: Holm Uhlig (UK)
- Endoscopy: Shyam Varadarajulu (USA)

GESA AGW 2023 International Speakers Presented via videoconferencing

- Sustainability: William Stableforth (UK)
- Sustainability: Vera Meeusen (UK)

GESA AGW Scientific Program Committee

their continued support of AGW—whether participating virtually or in person. Their contributions are the cornerstone of our event's success. The engagement and collective ownership of AGW have enabled it to evolve and thrive amidst a growing global educational landscape. I am truly thankful for this collaborative spirit, which continues to strengthen AGW year after year. Together, we can ensure its continued growth and excellence in the years to come.

Abstracts Submitted for GESA AGW 2023

- **380** General and YIA abstracts submitted
- Abstracts published in [Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology: Vol 38, No S2](#)
- **39** YIA submissions, including fourteen in Basic Science
- **73** abstracts accepted as Oral, including eight Young Investigator Awards
- **302** abstracts accepted as poster, including eighteen Posters of Merit

Australian Gastroenterology Week 2023

Chair and Speaker Gender Breakdown



70%

Respondents Rated AGW as Excellent - Very Good



19
International Speakers

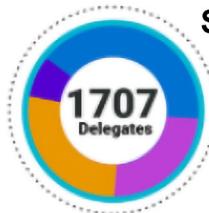


111
National Speakers

\$1.73M
Sponsor/Exhibitor Revenue



6 Industry Symposia



380

Abstracts Submitted



302

Poster Gallery



943
Delegates used the conference app

GESA AGW 2023 — Award Recipients

BOARD HONOURS



Distinguished Researcher Prize

Timothy Florin

Presentation: Research and Reflections



Outstanding Clinician Award

Mark Oliver

Presentation: Blood Sweat and Tears



GESA Lawrie Powell AC Grant – Established 2023

Sumaira Hasnain

Investigating the Therapeutic Potential of Liver Targeted IL-22 in Reducing Endothelial to Mesenchymal Transition

GESA YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARDS



June Halliday YIA Basic Science and People's Choice Award Basic Science

Georgette Radford (University of Adelaide)

Presentation: Detection of Colorectal Cancer by Tumour-homing Probiotic Bacteria.



Douglas Piper YIA Clinical Research and People's Choice Award Clinical Research

Jessica Fitzpatrick (Alfred Health)

Differential Effects of Diets High or Low in Emulsifiers/thickeners on Intestinal Barrier Function in Unstressed and Stressed States in Healthy Adults: A Blinded Randomised Cross-over Feeding Trial.

POSTERS OF MERIT PRESENTATION



Poster of Merit (Winner)

Natasha Janko

Presentation: Rotational Thromboelastometry predicts future bleeding events in patients with cirrhosis.



Poster of Merit (Winner)

Georgia Zeng

Presentation: Activation of the kynurene pathway potentially underlies neurodegeneration in patients with covert hepatic encephalopathy

GESA AGW 2023 — Abstract Reviewers

Our sincere thanks to everyone who volunteered their time to review abstracts

Yoon-Kyo An	Michael Grimm	Paul Pavli	Nathan Subramaniam
Minnie Au	Neel Heerasing	Sherman Picardo	William Tam
Robert Batey	Simon Hew	Yanfei (Jacob) Qi	Myo Jin Tang
Luis Calzadilla Bertot	Rupert Hinds	Tony Rahman	Mark Ward
Mark Bettington	Shaun Ho	Sarah Rouse	Molla Wassie
Kim Bridle	Mariko Howlett	Santosh Sanagapalli	Lauren White
Rebecca Burgell	Nadeem Kaakoush	Rohit Sawhney	May Wong
Samuel Costello	Patricia Kaazan	Michael Schultz	Sern Wei Yeoh
Marios Efthymiou	William Kemp	Lisa Shim	Neil Youngson
Lochlan Fennell	Mehul Lamba	William Sievert	Matt Zimmerman
Robert Fraser	Rupert Leong	Richard Skoien	
Mayur Garg	Richie Madden	Miles Sparrow	
Simon Ghaly	Marianne Mortimore	Kavitha Subramaniam	

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee



To Sept 2023

Alex Thompson (Chair)
Andrew Polson (Deputy Chair, Independent Member)
Alex Boussioutas (President-Elect)
Ray Boyapati (GESA Member)



From Sept 2023

Gerald Holtmann (Chair)
Andrew Polson (Deputy Chair, Independent Member)
Ray Boyapati (GESA Member)
Alex Thompson (President-Elect)

The Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee reports to the Board and oversees financial reporting, the audit, appointment of the auditor and risk management.

GESA is a company limited by guarantee. It operates as a Non-Profit Company with Health Promotion Charity sub status and is registered with, and reports to, the ACNC. Directors are listed on the ACNC website. We report on a calendar year basis.

GESA's operating surplus for 2023 is \$576,854.

The committee oversaw the Investment portfolios. The Investment portfolio had positive returns.

When combining our operating and non-operating activities, we made a net surplus of \$1,442,932.

Our main sources of income are membership fees, AGW, education events, and professional resources. We receive support for research thanks to our

industry partners. We also withdrew funds from our Investment Portfolio to fund peer reviewed research projects. Our largest expense is AGW, and delivering against our strategic pillars of Leadership, Best practice Research, Advocacy & Member services.

GESA had a total of 1,121 members, of whom 990 were financial, in 2023. Membership numbers increased from the previous year.

Income from CCRTGE applications and registration was \$292k (\$252k in 2022) and expenditure was \$226k.

Income from RCCC (Conjoint Recert commenced 1 Feb 2023) applications and registration was \$591k and expenditure was \$313k.

Members kindly donated (\$7,830). Member donations were partially used to support overseas practitioners to attend AGW who without the support would be unable to attend.

Summary Financial Position

Total assets	\$20,874,379	Operating income	\$5,504,420
Total liabilities	-\$1,747,367	Operating expenditure	-\$4,927,466
Net assets	\$19,127,012	Operating surplus	\$576,854
		Net movement in portfolios	\$866,079

The Audited Financial Statements are available for review in the Members Lounge on the GESA website: gesa.org.au > Members > Members Lounge

Research and Grants Committee



To Sept 2023

Paul Pavli (Co-Chair, GESA Board, IBD)
Vicki Whitehall (Co-Chair, Colorectal Cancer)
Leon Adams (Liver)
Golo Ahlenstiel (Liver)
Minoti Apte (Pancreatic Disease)
Kim Bridle (Basic Science, Liver)
Georgina Hold (IBD, Microbiome)
Tamara Mogilevski (IBD)
Nam Nguyen (Endoscopy)
Keith Ooi (Paediatric Gastroenterology)
Krish Raghunath (Endoscopy)
Susi Woods (Gastric Cancer)



From Sept 2023

David Hewett (Chair)
Vicki Whitehall (Co-Chair, Cancer)
Vipul Aggarwal (Endoscopy)
Golo Ahlenstiel (Liver)
Kim Bridle (Liver)
Nick Burgess (Endoscopy)
Lochlan Fennell (GI Cancer)
Georgina Hold (IBD/SPC, RW Convener 24)
Katharine Irvine (Liver, RW Convener 24)
Keith Ooi (Paediatrics)
Kavitha Subramaniam (IBD)
Abhinav (Abhi) Vasudevan (Luminal)
Karen Waller (Young GESA)
Susan Woods (Cancer)

In 2023, the Research and Grants Committee awarded more than \$800k in grants, fellowships and awards on behalf of the Society. These funds are part of a total \$3.7 million since 2016.

At GESA AGW 2023, the committee awarded the June Halliday YIA for Basic Science to Georgette Radford, and the Douglas Piper YIA for Clinical Research to Jessica Fitzpatrick. The YIA People's Choice Award for Basic Science was also won by Georgette Radford and the People's Choice Award for Clinical Research by Jessica Fitzpatrick.

2023, two Poster of Merit Awards were awarded. Natasha Janko and Georgia Zeng were the most notable posters at AGW.

In 2023, there were 20 expressions of interest for GESA Project Grants. Of these, 16 full applications were reviewed, and funding was awarded to eight people, each of whom received a GESA Project Grant of \$50,000 (excluding GST): Lauren Andersson, Zaid Ardalani, Benjamin Dwyer, Rimma Goldberg, Sumaira Hasnain, Claire O'Brien, Zhihong Xu, CK Yao.

The other recipients of research funding in 2023 are listed in the following pages. A list of current and past awardees is available on the GESA website.

The committee or its subcommittees also:

- Reviewed and updated the criteria for grants and awards
- Reviewed and rated all 39 abstracts submitted for the YIAs at GESA AGW and assessed the YIA presentations and Poster of Merit finalists
- Reviewed the committee's role in the Society.

Thanks to all committee members for their contribution.

Research and Grants Committee

GESA Research Workshop 2023

Conveners: Vicki Whitehall and Susi Woods

The GESA Research Workshop was held as a face-to-face event in Brisbane on 1–2 September 2023, preceding GESA AGW 2023. This collaborative and inclusive two-day event united Australian researchers from various fields of gastroenterology and hepatology. The workshop covered a wide range of gastroenterology-related research, including liver disease, cancer (upper and lower GI), metabolic and inflammatory conditions (IBD), cirrhosis complications, cutting-edge therapies, and the microbiome.

In line with GESA's overarching mission to enhance gastrointestinal health for both patients and the broader community, the workshop underscored the pivotal role that research plays in advancing this goal.

It provided a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, fostering collaborations between clinicians, investigators, postgraduate and PhD scholars, and both clinical and scientific researchers.

One of the highlights of the workshop was the opportunity it presented for early- to mid-career researchers to hone their presentation skills and gain confidence by sharing their work with their peers in an open, supportive setting.

This forum was integral to promoting the next generation of research talent in the field.

The Research Workshop program:

- a showcase of cutting-edge research from both Australian and international experts,
- presentations by distinguished international and national speakers,
- valuable face-to-face interaction and networking opportunities for participants from around the country,
- informal networking events facilitated through the workshop's social program.

Funding has been allocated to support researchers at every stage of their careers, promoting increased participation in the workshop. This event also serves as a platform for members to engage, interact, and foster new collaborations. The committee remains proactive in implementing strategies to expand membership and enhance the involvement of career scientists and basic researchers within GESA.

We thank all delegates and speakers who attended this amazing program. Special appreciation goes out to our sponsors, the Research Workshop Organising Committee, and the dedicated GESA events team for their efforts in making this event a success.

Attendance

A total of 111 delegates attended the Research Workshop 2023, with five international speakers (who presented in-person), eight national speakers and 33 free paper presentations.

International Speakers (In-Person)

- Kimmie Ng (USA)
- David Rubin (Canada)
- Gideon Hirschfield (UK)
- Rob Knight (USA)
- Jeff Hasty (USA Attendance)

Grants and Fellowship Recipients



GESA Dr Falk Pharma Research Grant

Work Completed in 2023

Scott Nightingale (John Hunter Children's Hospital)

Project: Food antigen stimulation of oesophageal organoids from children with eosinophilic oesophagitis can triggers be identified in vitro?

Value: \$30,000



GESA Sustainability Grant

Christopher Leung (Austin Health)

Project: Combating Climate Change with Education: Evolving to Choose Wisely and Gastroenterology Training.

Value: \$25,000



Janssen – Regional, Remote and Indigenous Fellowship

Bassem Ibrahim

This fellowship is funded by Janssen, GESA and the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Value: \$160,000



Bushell GESA Post-Doc Fellowship

Susan Woods

(Concord Hospital)

Project: The Next Generation of Gastric Cancer

Value: \$300,000, 3 years



Rose Amarant Grant

Rupert Leong (Concord Hospital)

This grant is funded by a donation from the Amarant Rabinov Charitable Committee. Project Title: Persistence Australian National IBD Cohort (PANIC): Evaluation of the 100 Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Data for Crohns Disease and Ulcerative Colitis.

Value: \$7,500, 6 months



GESA Mostyn Family Grant

Chamini Perera (University of New South Wales) Project:

Understanding the Role of Mediators Involved in Insulin Secretion and Insulin Signalling Pathways in Pancreatic Cancer-Related Diabetes: Potential Biomarkers of Pancreatic Cancer.

Value: \$30,000

GESA Project Grant Recipients



GESA Project Grant

Rimmer Goldberg (Monash Health)

Project: Antigen Specific Regulatory T Cell Therapy for Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Zaid Ardalan (Alfred Health)

Project: A prospective study of the utility of intestinal ultrasound and faecal calprotectin in the diagnosis and monitoring of immune checkpoint inhibitor colitis.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Sumaira Hasnain (The University of Queensland)

Project: Developing Pancreas-Targeted Interleukin-22 as a Therapeutic for Pancreatitis.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Benjamin Dwyer (Curtin University)

Data-based prediction of ideal extracellular culture environment to enable patient-derived organoid technology in clinical decision making for liver cancer.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Claire O'Brien (University of Canberra)

Project: CRISPR/Cas9 knockout of Escherichia coli genes found to be associated with Crohn's disease.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Zihong Xu (University of New South Wales)

Towards a Novel Therapeutic Approach for Alcoholic Chronic Pancreatitis

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

Lauren Andersson (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre)

Project: Analysis of genomic and epigenomic modifications of cell free DNA within a single workflow in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma and chronic liver disease- a pilot study.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Project Grant

CK Yao (Monash University)

Investigating the therapeutic potential of a diet low in sulphite and carrageenan food additives for ulcerative colitis.

Value: \$50,000



GESA Credentialing



Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (CCRTGE)



Darren Pavey (Chair, RACP)
Daniel Croagh (RACS)
Looi Ee (Paediatric, RACP)
Andrew Lee
Sam O'Connor (GESA)
Iain Skinner (GESA)
Melinda Van Oosterum (Rural, RACS)

Executive Summary

Certification (of training) in adult colonoscopy became mandatory from 1 January 2019 for all practitioners working in health service organisations being assessed to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (second edition).

In 2023, the Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (CCRTGE) received a total of 285 applications to recognise training. The number of applications has stabilised post COVID, and the number of applications from experienced practitioners has continued to decrease to 15 applications in 2023. As at 31 December 2023, we have received 2,612 applications.

We are in the process of upgrading the IT platform that hosts the CCRTGE Program to improve the experience for all users. This project will be completed in 2024.

Background

The CCRTGE is a national body established in 1990 by three parent bodies: Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA), Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) and Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP).

Colonoscopy training is assessed and certified in the context of College Specialist Advanced Training

Programs, but the CCRTGE also assesses other training options.

The Experienced Practitioner Pathway (EPP) is available for experienced clinicians who were not assessed for certification in the context of their College Specialist Advanced Training Program (ATP). EPP pathway logbooks require a minimum of 200 colonoscopy procedures to be logged. These can be retrospective cases, however 10% of logged procedures must be under the direct supervision of a CCRTGE recognised adult colonoscopist (who is a more experienced practitioner or in a more senior position).

The CCRTGE also offers pathways for the assessment of overseas specialists with prior training and endoscopic experience seeking to practice in Australia. The CCRTGE recognises training in gastroscopy (adult/paediatric), colonoscopy (adult/paediatric), Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS) and capsule endoscopy for physicians and surgeons of all colleges.

The Committee

The role of the CCRTGE Committee is to review the currency and practicality of the standards for certification of endoscopic procedures.

The CCRTGE Committee meets bi-annually in May and November and is governed by a terms of reference.

Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (CCRTGE)

Data Analysis

As at 31 December 2023, we have received 2,612 applications submitted for certification. While the number of applications in 2023 is marking a slight decline compared to previous years, we continue to receive a steady influx of practitioners seeking certification. In 2023 we received a total of 285 applications for certification.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Applications received	420	251	274	332	357	399	294	285	2,612

CCRTGE Applications and Outcomes

The table below categorizes the applications by procedure and college, including those who were requested to provide additional information (fellowship certificates is the main item required).

Applications by procedure		Applications by fellowship			
	Received	RACP	RACS	ACRRM	O/S (pending [†])
Capsule endoscopy	12	12 (1)	—	—	—
Colonoscopy (adult)	116	60 (6)	56 (8)	—	—
Colonoscopy (paediatric)	2	1	1	—	—
ERCP	18	12	6	—	—
EUS	13	12	1	—	—
Gastroscopy (adult)	119	58 (7)	58 (8)	1	2
Gastroscopy (paediatric)	5	5	—	—	—
Total	285	160 (14)	122 (16)	1	2

Applications by pathway in 2023	Received
Australian advanced trainee	235
Experienced practitioner	15
Overseas-trained specialist	33
New Zealand CCRTGE-recognised	2
Total	285

Colonoscopy Recertification Program



Mark Schoeman (Chair, GESA)
Gregor Brown (RACP, appointed 2023)
Nitin Gupta (Paediatric, RACP)
Henry Hicks (Rural, RACS)
Melissa Jennings (GES)
Peter Katelaris (RACP)
Brian Kirky (RACS)
Ian Norton (GES)
Scott Schoeman (RACP, appointed 2023)
David Scott (Rural RACP)
Ian Skinner (GES)

The RCCC committee meets monthly and is governed under the RCCC terms of reference.

Executive Summary

Re-certification (of ongoing competency) in colonoscopy became mandatory on 1 January 2019 for all practitioners working in health service organisations. This has led to an increase in the number of practitioners enrolled in the program within the three (3) year time limit. As at 31 December 2023, 2,243 practitioners have enrolled in the program.

We are in the process of upgrading the IT platform that hosts the RCCC Program to improve the experience for all users. This project will be completed in 2024.

Background

The Recertification in Colonoscopy Conjoint Committee (RCCC) was established 1 February 2023 by three parent bodies: Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GES), Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) and Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP). Prior to this, while the committee had representation from each of the bodies, the program was solely run by GES.

The RCCC is responsible to recertify practitioners in colonoscopy, provided they meet the following criteria (as set out in the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards):

- hold Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (CCRTGE) certification for colonoscopy;
- complete at least 150 consecutive colonoscopies over 3 years, which can be recorded in batches of 50. It is a requirement that at least 50 are performed in the 12 months prior to the application;
- ensure at least 95% of the 150 procedures are to the caecum or terminal ileum of intact colons;
- ensure the adenoma detection rate is at least 25% in eligible patients;
- ensure the sessile serrated adenoma/polyp detection rate is at least 4% in eligible patients;
- complete a short, online 'cognitive review' which provides links to education tools for further education and information; and
- undertake recertification every 3 years using your established GES logbook.

Colonoscopy Recertification Program

The role of the RCCC committee is to:

- oversee the implementation of the program;
- determine and oversee the process of recertification;
- review, develop and deliver the education and training program in partnership with the existing GESA National Endoscopy Training Program (NETI) and/or RACS Renewal of Endoscopy Skills and Training Program (REST) program.

Recertification is designed to support practitioners in:

- maintaining their expertise in colonoscopy;
- continuing to develop their skills through subsidised training opportunities; and
- increasing safety standards and the quality of care being delivered to patients.

Data Analysis

The number of practitioners participating in the recertification program has increased significantly. We had 171 new enrolments for RCCC in 2023.

Participants in the RCCC program

To date, we have 2,243 participants enrolled in the recertification program.

Participants in the RCCC program by college by state to date:

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
RACP	24	316	4	230	82	20	295	95	1,105
RACS	12	368	16	191	75	20	271	83	1,093
RACGP	1	5	—	2	—	—	9	1	18
ACRRM	—	7	1	12	—	—	4	2	27
Total	37	696	21	435	157	40	579	181	2,243

Recertification in Colonoscopy applications

We received 754 applications for recertification in 2023.

Recertifications in the RCCC program by college and state to date:

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
RACP	16	245	6	199	65	13	206	77	827
RACS	4	203	8	145	54	10	169	53	646
RACGP	1	3	—	3	—	—	6	1	14
ACRRM	—	5	1	10	—	—	3	1	20
Total	21	456	15	357	119	23	384	132	1,507

Faculty Reports

Endoscopy Faculty



To Sept 2023

Matthew Remedios (Chair)
Vipul Aggarwal (Chair-Elect)
Nicholas Burgess
Saurabh Gupta
Sneha John
Nam Nguyen
Krish Ragunath
Christine Welch



From Sept 2023

Vipul Aggarwal (Chair,
Education, SPC, RGC)
Nicholas Burgess (RGC)
Saurabh Gupta
Nam Nguyen
Krish Ragunath
Rajvinder Singh
Christine Welch
Linda Zhang

It gives me great pleasure to provide an update on behalf of the Faculty of Endoscopy.

The Endoscopy Faculty serves as the key body responsible for addressing "everything endoscopy" and engages proactively with all stakeholders to continually enhance endoscopic services in Australia, thereby improving patient outcomes.

Our current committee continues to build upon the significant progress made by the previous committee, which was chaired by Matthew Remedios. We have been dedicated to bringing past initiatives to fruition while also advancing new projects.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the faculty members—Nick Burgess, Nam Nguyen, Christine Welch, Krish Ragunath, and Saurabh Gupta—for their hard work, dedication, and time over the past 12 months. I also want to warmly welcome Rajvinder Singh and Linda Zhang as our newest faculty members. On behalf of the faculty, I also acknowledge the support of the GESA board and the GESA operations team for their administrative support..

I am pleased to highlight some of our key accomplishments this year:

MBS Item Number for Cholangioscopy

We successfully submitted a request to the Department of Health for an MBS item number for cholangioscopy, which has now been approved. My sincere thanks to all involved in this process.

Position Statements

The Endoscopy Faculty has worked diligently on several position statements. I am thrilled to announce that some have already been published, and others are slated for publication next year. These include:

- "Quality Upper Gastrointestinal Endoscopy in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand: A Joint Position Statement"
- "Australian and New Zealand Position Statement on the Role of Bidirectional Endoscopy (Same Day Upper and Lower Gastrointestinal Endoscopy)"

Special thanks to Sneha John, Krish Ragunath, and Matthew Remedios for their exceptional contributions.

Endoscopy Faculty

Updated Patient Information Resources

The GESA patient information endoscopy resources have been refreshed and are available on the GESA website.

Collaboration with ANZCA

It has been encouraging to see GESA and ANZCA collaborate over the past two years to develop joint position statements. Notably, a clinical practice recommendation regarding the periprocedural use of GLP-1RAs/GIPRAs has been co-authored with representatives from GESA, ANZCA, and other key associations, and is now available on the GESA website.

PGO9 Guidelines on Sedation

The updated PGO9 guidelines on sedation in endoscopy were published last year. We are currently awaiting the results post-trial period for further review.

Looking ahead, the Faculty of Endoscopy is discussing several future initiatives, which will be presented to the GESA board for approval. Proposed initiatives include:

- Creating a video library for general and advanced endoscopic procedures, with submissions invited from all GESA members and access granted to all members.
- Developing "Train the Trainer" courses for EUS and potentially other interventional programs.
- Formalizing training and accreditation for advanced endoscopic procedures, including balloon enteroscopy, third space endoscopy, and interventional EUS, similar to other endoscopic procedures.

As a specialty, we can anticipate ongoing exciting developments in endoscopy. One of the most significant advancements will be the integration of AI in endoscopy, potentially extending beyond polyp detection to include polyp characterization, detecting metaplasia or dysplasia, and identifying early cancer in the GI tract. AI may also become invaluable in assessing indeterminate biliary strictures and diagnosing and characterizing pancreatic lesions. However, this advancement brings challenges, particularly concerning medicolegal implications.

Another major challenge is addressing the considerable waste generated in endoscopy. We are committed to developing a more sustainable and environmentally friendly endoscopy practice, with efforts currently led by the Sustainability Committee under Prof. Geoffrey Metz. We hope to reduce our ecological footprint—because the only waste we want to see in endoscopy is our old ideas!

GI Cancer Faculty



Hooi Ee (Chair)
Lauren Andersson
Thomas Borody
Andrew Buckle
Lochlan Fennell
Sunil Gupta
Erin Symonds
Michael Wallace
Graeme Young AM

It is a great privilege to Chair the inaugural GI Cancer Faculty which came into being in late 2023 and recruited our members early in 2024. We encompass a group of clinicians and scientists with broad expertise and experience, all eager to make contributions.

A faculty for cancer seems long overdue as cancers of the digestive organs have the unenviable reputation of making up 3 of the top 5 biggest global cancer killers (colorectal, liver, gastric). The other important gastrointestinal cancers are pancreatic, oesophageal and biliary, and in all instances, control of these cancers require strong multidisciplinary and multipronged approaches. No surprise then, that the proposal for this faculty has been under consideration amongst many GESA members for a long time.

The aim of the Faculty will necessarily include engaging with GESA members and the executive to promote education, advocacy and research. We expect the Faculty to be the GESA advisory body on cancer. This includes responding to media enquiries, public information and government requests for engagement, while internally, also providing GESA members with support on best practice evidence-based guidelines. To be of value, the Faculty has to be a platform that brings attention to areas of impact, interest and innovation. Cancer the crab has many legs and large claws, and its control requires an extensive range of approaches from prevention, screening, early detection and therapy, all the while being underpinned by evidence generated through research. Cancer evolves, so we also have to be responsive to changes in disease epidemiology, biology and therapy, in concert with changes in environment, exposures and technology. Examples of such changes include early onset colorectal

cancer, effects of obesity and inactivity, dramatic rise of hepatocellular carcinoma incidence, advances in therapeutic endoscopy and insights into the role of the microbiome, to name a few.

As this Faculty is not organ-specific, there will be potential for collaborations with the established faculties (especially Endoscopy and Liver) and include a wide range of clinicians (e.g., medical, nursing, allied health) and researchers (public health, clinical, biologists). Already, GESA members apportion substantial energy to deal with cancer, from providing dietary and lifestyle advice, performing endoscopy and surgery, and on to research studies, and as a minimum, we aim to promote awareness of their activities.

We are in dynamic and exciting times, and there is always more to come. We acknowledge that the fight against cancer must also address social, cultural and economic inequities, most shamefully exposed in our struggle to Close the Gap. Our infant Faculty must also acknowledge the legacy of GESA members having made enormous contributions to the cancer field, from discovering the critical role of *H. pylori* in gastric cancer, identifying a new serrated pathway in colorectal cancer, developing advanced endoscopic therapies and advocating for the world-leading National Bowel Cancer Screening Program, to name but just a few, and to overlook countless other contributions. While this Cancer Faculty has been late in coming, we're now up and running.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Faculty



To Sept 2023

Britt Christensen (Chair)
Robert Bryant (Chair-Elect)
Crispin Corte
Simon Ghaly
Peter Lewindon
Tamara Mogilevski
Kavitha Subramaniam



From Sept 2023

Rob Bryant (Chair)
Ray Boyapati
Crispin Corte
Zubin Grover
Kate Lynch
Tamara Mogilevski
Aviv Pudipeddi
Miles Sparrow
Kavitha Subramaniam
Lena Thin
Emily Wright

During 2023, the IBD Faculty remained focused on key strategic areas of advocacy, education, research, and promoting best access to IBD care across rural and remote Australia. The IBD faculty has continued to represent for the GESA membership and engage with key stakeholders including patient groups.

Advocacy

The IBD Faculty has been actively involved in several areas which are important to both clinicians and patients.

Faecal calprotectin

We have lodged an MSAC application for faecal calprotectin to be funded for monitoring IBD, which has been progressed through necessary processes which will continue throughout 2024.

Stream-lined access to advanced IBD therapies

PBS paperwork for advanced IBD therapies is time-consuming and deprives clinicians of time

that may be better directed to patient care. The PBS paperwork issue has been compounded by rising numbers of IBD patients receiving advanced therapies. The IBD Faculty has worked closely with Crohn's and Colitis Australia and other groups including Australian Rheumatology Association to continue to lobby key stakeholders on this issue.

Access to novel IBD therapies

The IBD Faculty has been active in advocating for access to novel advanced therapies for IBD in Australia. Currently available therapies for IBD have incomplete efficacy and high rates of secondary loss of response. As such, access to new therapies is crucial for patients with IBD. The IBD Faculty worked closely with GESA to produce a submission to the Health Technology Assessment consultation process on this issue. A coordinated advocacy approach is being undertaken to seek access to new IBD therapies in Australia, whilst acknowledging our responsibility to the healthcare budget.

The IBD Faculty also provided a submission to support access to a novel recombinant vaccination against Shingles (Shingrix) for IBD patients.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Faculty

Education

Australian Gastroenterology Week

The GESA AGW 2023 IBD program was very successful and well-attended. International speakers included David Rubin and Marla Dubinsky from the USA and topics discussed included surgery in IBD, sequencing of therapies, and microbial manipulation. The Gastroenterology Network of Intestinal Ultrasound (GENIUS) program included a live intestinal ultrasound demonstration by an international presenter Shintaro Sagami from Japan.

Updated resources

The IBD Faculty contributed to a number of resources on the GESA website, including handouts for ozanimod, tofacitinib, upadacitinib and ustekinumab. Additionally, the IBD Faculty has produced a guideline on IBD Fellowship requirements.

Remote and rural access to IBD Care

IBD Care varies widely according to geography and patients in rural and remote locations may be disadvantaged and without safe access to advanced

therapy and monitoring. Members on the IBD faculty joined a GESA initiated trip to Alice Springs in 2023. A proposal for a remote model of IBD care is anticipated in 2024.

The IBD Faculty's priorities for 2024 include:

Advocacy

The IBD faculty will continue to advocate in key areas including funding for faecal calprotectin for IBD monitoring, stream-lined access to advanced therapy in IBD, and access to new medical therapies for IBD in Australia.

Professional resources

GESA professional resources are widely utilised by health professionals. The IBD Faculty aims to create a 'living guideline' IBD document accessible through the GESA website.

Liver Faculty



To Sept 2023

Jacob George (Chair)
Leon Adams
Golo Ahlenstiel
Jessica Howell
Katharine Irvine
Miriam Levy
Avik Majumdar
James O'Beirne



From Sept 2023

Jessica Howell (Chair)
Leon Adams
Golo Ahlenstiel
Katharine Irvine
Miriam Levy
Avik Majumdar
James O'Beirne
Emily Wright

The Liver Faculty continued to actively support and lead research in 2023, with multiple national collaborative publications. One successful example was the national TIPs working group survey, was completed with a draft in circulation (publication planned for 2024).

The Hepatology Roundtable was held on 20th-21st July 2023 at Sofitel Noosa. The meeting was a resounding success, involving extensive discussions about cases and time to catch up with colleagues. Professor Gideon Hirschfield was a lively and thought-provoking speaker, providing plenary sessions of the highest calibre. Many thanks to the organisers, Caroline Tallis, Miriam Levy and Kate Muller for creating such an engaging and cutting-edge program.

Several new and updated clinical resources were developed in 2023. A new clinical resource "[Understanding Liver Tests for GPs](#)" was developed by Miriam Levy. The "[National Consensus recommendations on the management of hepatitis C in prisons](#)" led by Alex Thompson, was published in the Medical Journal of Australia in March 2023.

The **Consensus statement for the assessment of MAFLD in Australian primary care**, led by Leon Adams, was officially launched at AGW 2023 following a Delphi process and consensus meeting

held in Sydney in June 2023. The manuscript is being finalised, with publication and promotion planned for 2024.

The NHMRC endorsed [Guidelines on surveillance for hepatocellular carcinoma](#) were published in 2023 in collaboration with The Daffodil Centre and led by Jacob George (Liver Faculty Chair 2021-23). This work involved many of the GESA Liver Faculty and GESA members.

Development of a **Consensus statement on the diagnosis and management of portal hypertension** also commenced in 2023, with a steering committee appointed, funding sources secured and working groups apportioned. A face-to-face consensus meeting is planned at the Hepatology Roundtable in August 2024. Additionally, the [National consensus statement on the management of hepatocellular carcinoma 2020](#) will be updated and launched at AGW in 2024, with a steering committee representing each state appointed.

The patient resource on [Haemochromatosis](#) was updated in 2023 and work on new clinical resources such as Primary Biliary Cirrhosis has commenced, for publication in 2024.

GESA Liver Faculty continued to support collaboration through co-design and endorsement of several clinical resource tools in 2023, including ASHM Hepatitis B, C and paediatric hepatitis C resources.

Liver Faculty

Advocacy

In 2023, GESA Liver Faculty established several new advocacy initiatives, including bi-monthly meetings with relevant federal Department of Health committees and bi-monthly meetings to strengthen relationships with aligned community organisations including Hepatitis Australia, Cancer Council Victoria, Victorian Cancer Agency, LiverWELL and FARE. The Liver Faculty also re-established GESA representation and consultation for the National hepatitis B and C strategies, National Hepatitis C testing policy and Australian Cancer Plan (2023).

The Liver Faculty engaged with AIHW to discuss improved transparency and granularity of chronic liver disease reporting in AIHW and Australian Burden of Disease study reports. Bi-monthly meetings and a collaborative report on Chronic Liver Disease in Australia are planned for 2024.

GESA Liver Faculty also provided support for several PBAC and MSAC applications in 2023, including several for hepatitis B and C testing led by ASHM.

Professional development

- Provide a forum for members with an interest or expertise in the liver specialty
- Work to improve research, teaching and clinical practice in the liver specialty
- Participate in AGW by initiating workshops and providing ideas for symposia and lectures
- Foster training in hepatology through travelling fellowships or other appropriate training opportunities
- Interact or be affiliated with regional and international groups related to hepatology
- Provide advice and information to the GESA Board

General Luminal GI Faculty



Nick Talley (Chair)
Bob Anderson
Chamara Basnayake
Rebecca Burgell
Charlie Cock
Chris Hair
Magnus Halland
Simon Knowles
Allison Malcolm
Ayesha Shah
Heidi Staudacher
Abhinav Vasudevanz
May Wong

The Luminal GI Faculty of GESA was formed in 2023 in response to a recognized need to ensure representation of critical yet under-represented areas within luminal GI disorders. By establishing a dedicated faculty focused specifically on luminal GI disorders, GESA aims to consolidate and strengthen collective efforts towards advancing research and management in this important area of gastroenterology.

At GESA 2023, the inaugural committee convened for its first meeting, appointing Nick Talley as Chair of the Faculty.

The Luminal GI Faculty is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future landscape of GI disorders. Looking ahead to 2024, the priorities of the Luminal Faculty include:

Establishing specialised subcommittees:

At the inaugural meeting of the Luminal GI Faculty, specialized subcommittees were established to address targeted advocacy, research, diet, and educational goals. This strategic approach allows the faculty to focus on specific areas of importance within luminal GI disorders, leveraging the expertise of members to drive progress in key areas of need.

Additionally, we plan to amplify our advocacy efforts to raise awareness and support for luminal diseases through various educational initiatives. We will work to support for luminal GI disorders in research, training programs, and public awareness campaigns.

Paediatric Faculty



To Sept 2023

Ajay Sharma (Chair)
Prerna Diksha
Looi Ee
Nitin Gupta
Usha Krishnan
Jonathan O'Donnell
Jeremy Rosenbaum
Mark Safe
Nikhil Thapar



From Sept 2023

Chair: Nikhil Thapar
Andrew Day
Looi Ee
Nitin Gupta
Usha Krishnan
Kathleen McGrath
Jonathan O'Donnell
Mark Oliver
Jeremy Rosenbaum
Mark Safe
Ajay Sharma

The Paediatric Faculty has had a dynamic year in education. In 2023, we launched the Paediatric GI webinars, featuring sessions on Intestinal Failure, Pancreatitis (including islet cell transplants), and IBD (highlighting the use of ultrasound as a clinical tool and the role of the microbiome in IBD).

Looking ahead to 2024, our sessions will cover Coeliac Disease, GI Motility, and Liver Disease. We've been fortunate to have several distinguished speakers from across the country participate in these webinars. Additionally, we've started a lunchtime GI Grand Rounds in 2024, with outstanding speakers such as Associate Professor Jay Thiagarajah from Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and Professor Simon Ling from the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. The feedback on these sessions has been very positive, and we plan to continue and expand these efforts in the coming year.

We are also organizing a "Paediatric Post-Graduate Half-Day" before the main AGW meeting in Adelaide 2024. This event will feature cutting-edge presentations followed by an interactive case-based session led by an excellent panel. With support from GESA and the GESA Education Committee, the

Paediatric Faculty will host its first "Round Table Meeting," offering a unique opportunity for our small group of clinicians and allied health teams from across Australia to come together for a weekend of education and collaboration.

Furthermore, building on a Victorian initiative from the COVID period (led by Mark Oliver), we will be establishing a National Case-Based Paediatric Fellow Training Night, which will occur monthly. This initiative will bring together 12-14 fellows from around the country with consultant moderators from all states that have a Paediatric GI service. These interactive sessions aim to cover the curriculum informally and foster collaboration within our GI community. GESA is supporting this effort with planning and administration, and we hope it will enhance trainee education and camaraderie.

These achievements underscore our commitment to education as a central pillar of our Faculty. We look forward to advancing these initiatives further in 2024 and 2025.

GESA Network Groups

Clinical Research Network



Avik Majumdar (Chair)

Emily He

Jacinta Holmes

Natasha Janko

Ken Liu

Kate Lynch

Kate Muller

James O'Beirne

Michael Wallace

After undergoing a significant transformation in 2022 to bring it into line with other GESA special interest groups and faculty bodies, the Liver Clinical Research Network (CRN) has operated in 2023 with a new oversight committee. The committee was established with broad and diverse representation from all mainland states, with comprehensive experience and expertise in clinical research. The CRN also acknowledges and celebrates the immense contribution of the outgoing chair, Prof Stuart Roberts. Prof Roberts established the CRN in 2010, and his leadership has led to the network's continuous track record of impactful and practice changing hepatology research since inception. The committee's aim is to ensure the CRN continues on this trajectory for the future with quality and collaborative hepatology research that is specific to the Australian context.

There has been continued activity with existing CRN projects. The ORACLES (National Observational Epidemiological and Clinical Quality HCC Registry) project led by Prof Stuart Roberts and Dr Jon Abdelmalak has had a recent publication (Cancers 2023 Dec 7; 15(24):5741) with two further planned manuscripts for 2024. This important work has highlighted the differences in treatment and outcomes of early-stage HCC in Australia with 450 patients included from 10 centres. Work on the OPERA-C (Observational Prospective Epidemiological Registry in Australia of HCV Liver Disease) database continues, led by A/Prof Paul Clark, with the final dataset containing

over 3700 patients and further publications planned for the coming year. The AusDILIN (Australian Drug-Induced Liver Injury Network) project has continued under the leadership of Prof Amanda Nicoll. The AUSTIPS registry for the transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunts, led by Prof Golo Ahlenstiel, has had funding secured and is in the final stages of database development. A survey of 23 centres across Australia was used to inform registry development has been circulated. A/ Prof Sid Sood has been leading a project investigating the cost-effectiveness of regular outpatient albumin infusion that is in the final stages of data collection across 10 sites.

Liver CRN Objectives:

- Provide a national framework for investigator-initiated research in liver disease
- Develop and maintain a network of investigators and sites for clinical and translational research, disease registries and clinical trials related to liver disease
- Develop or contribute to the design, conduct and implementation of registries, research studies and clinical trials related to liver disease
- Develop interest and skills in clinical research in liver disease among emerging gastroenterologists and hepatologists

Private Practice Network



To Sept 2023

Anil Asthana (Chair)
Adam Gordon (Chair Elect)
Simon Jakobovits
Albert Nwaba
Stephen Pianko



From Sept 2023

Adam Gordon (Chair, Professional Resources)
Ashley Miller (Chair Elect)
Anil Asthana (Member Services)
Michael Miros
Jeevinesh Naidu
Albert Nwaba (Education)
Stephen Pianko (Advocacy)
Jeremy Rosenbaum

Since the GESA Private Practice Network (PPN) was formally launched in 2020, the network has continued to grow.

There were a few highlights in 2023, including:

- Advocacy regarding introducing a Streamline authority number for twice daily dosing of high-dose PPI medications
- Advocacy for modifiers relating to emergency after-hours endoscopy
- The GESA AGW 2023 PPN program was well attended and with significant interest in the changing bowel cancer screening guidelines, payroll tax changes affecting specialist medical practice, cybersecurity, and management of common functional gut symptoms

PPN's priorities for 2024 include:

- Advocacy: Continuing to work with the GESA Board regarding private practice and Medicare-related matters including the colonoscopy item number review
- Networking: Participating in events to serve as a platform for continued education, learning and gain valuable insights
- Member support: Creating an open forum for our members to understand their needs and requirements

Regional, Remote and Indigenous Network



Regional, Remote and Indigenous Network Committee

Alice Bennett (Co-Chair)

Lauren Beswick (Co-Chair)

Rajit Gilhotra

Stuart Kostalas

Andrew McIntyre

Rufus Mcleay

John Masson

Robyn Nagel

Albert Nwaba

The Regional, Remote and Indigenous Network have dedicated their energies into the Outreach Program that saw the inaugural program address the three key strategies:

- the RRI Fellowship
- the Visiting Professor Program, and
- the Outreach Endoscopy Program.

The 2023 GESA Fellow in at Royal Darwin Hospital was Bassem Ibrahim , and in November we announced the 2024 recipients of the GESA Regional, Remote & Indigenous (RRI) Fellowships, Dr Yu Sung Kim Royal Darwin Hospital Fellow and Dr Ritesh Bhandari as the inaugural Alice Springs Hospital Fellow. We congratulated Bassem on gaining a place in the Advanced Training Program in 2024 and feel assured that his experience as a GESA Fellow helped gain the place as well as set him up for a successful career as a gastroenterologist.

Our sincere thanks also go to our visiting professors Rebecca Burgell, Jane Andrews, Rajvinder Singh,

Cameron Bell and John Lubel. John was the travelling Professor to Darwin in November 2023 and attended the Royal Darwin and Palmerston Hospitals. He reflected, “.. it was a great privilege to be given the opportunity to visit the Northern Territory for the visiting professor week. The Regional, Remote & indigenous Network should be applauded for their achievement in successfully implementing the inaugural GESA RRI Fellow.”

At AGW 2023, Julian Rong with Alice Bennett, presented on the Outreach Endoscopy Program that was delivered in Alice Springs in 2023. They highlighted the decreased access to clinicians in the NT compared to other States and Territories. The leadership of Ben Devereaux (President), supported by Kirsty Campbell (Board member), the RRI network and many more stakeholders, key connections were forged that built the foundations for a successful partnership delivering tangible outcomes to all including improved patient care.

We all look forward to the ongoing developments for both the Outreach program and the RRI network.

Sustainability Network



To Sept 2023

Chris Hair (Chair)
Michael Swan (Chair Elect)
Lauren Beswick
Anne Duggan
Finlay Macrae
Geoffrey Metz
Daniel Schneider



From Sept 2023

Michael Swan (Chair, Education)
Chris Hair
Lauren Beswick
Chris Leung
Finlay Mcrae
Geoffrey Metz
Krish Ragunath
Daniel Schneider

2023 was another great and formative year for the GESA Sustainability Network (GSN). Formed in 2022, the GSN continues to develop our mission to encourage and support members, volunteers and employees of GESA to practise environmental sustainability and stewardship in the provision of digestive health care and research.

Our year highlights included:

- Ongoing delivery of webinar-based education on sustainability in gastroenterology.
- Hosting of a successful and well attended sustainability session at GESA AGW
- Inaugural presentation of sustainability related research abstracts at AGW

- Industry based discussions and presentations on the importance of sustainability and environmental stewardship for endoscopy equipment
- Ongoing establishment and collaborations with local (RACS, GENCA, RACP) and overseas (WGO, NZSG, ESGE, BSG) networks in sustainability development and awareness
- Formative development of an endoscopy sustainability toolkit to facilitate the adoption of sustainable endoscopy practice in Australia.

Looking towards 2024, we are encouraged by the growing appreciation for the need for sustainability in gastroenterology and endoscopy. GESA remains committed to improving the awareness and accessibility of sustainable gastroenterology practice.

Young GESA Network



To Sept 2023

David Prince (Chair)
Yoon-Kyo An (Chair Elect)
Chamara Basnayake
Georgina Cunningham
Simon Hew
Jonathan O'Donnell
Anatasia Volovents
May Wong



From Sept 2023

Yoon An (Chair)
Daniel Clayton-Chubb
Richard Fernandes
Nicholas Hannah
Natasha Janko
Emi Khoo
Aviv Pudipeddi
Ayesha Shah
Ashish Srinivasan
Karen Waller

2023, Young GESA continued to celebrate its achievements, welcoming a new committee with Yoon-Kyo An as Chair. At AGW 2023, Young GESA showcased its impactful initiatives, empowering members to navigate specialised areas such as IBD, liver disease, and Medicare billing. We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the coordination of AGW and attended the session.

GESA Gut School and Young GESA Weekend, was held successfully in Kingscliff, NSW in November, offered advanced trainees a unique blend of academic rigor and social engagement. With comprehensive sessions on endoscopy, liver diseases, IBD treatments, and career pathways in gastroenterology, the event featured over 20 speakers and drew over 40 trainees. Positive feedback emphasised the invaluable networking opportunities with senior clinicians and peers. Special thanks to Kirsty Campbell, David Hewett, Matthew Remedios, John Lubel, and Amany Zekry for their steadfast support in organising and backing Young GESA.

Looking ahead, the Young GESA Network Committee anticipates another dynamic year, with ambitious objectives including:

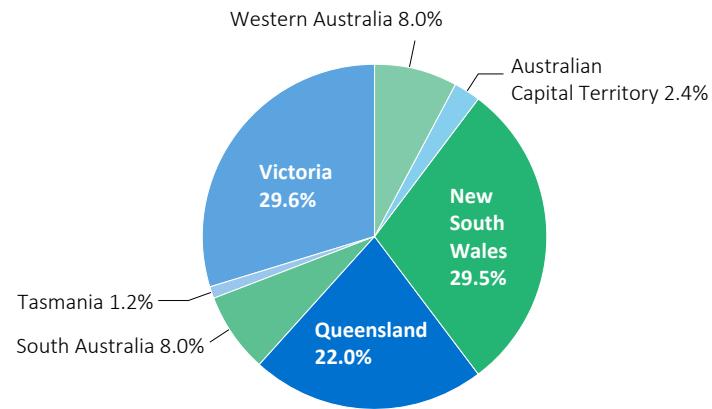
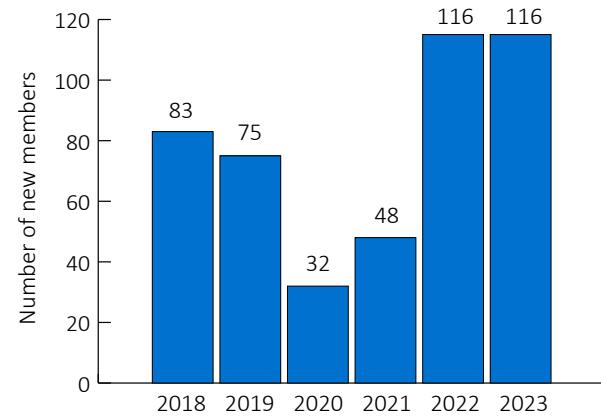
- Ensuring equitable opportunities for trainees regardless of experience level.
- Establishing a robust mentoring program and fostering connections with private practice networks to enhance training gaps.
- Supporting women in navigating careers in gastroenterology, promoting research, and families.
- Expanding networking avenues.
- Advocating for increased funding to support emerging researchers.

The Young GESA Network committee is committed to advancing the field of gastroenterology and fostering the next generation of leaders in healthcare.

Members

Members

We had a total of 1,121 members as at December 2023.



We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to our 116 new members:

Ellen Anderson
Jesna Ann Koshy
Paul Armstrong
Hamid Aghdai
Amir Ashrafizadeh
Michael Au
Vicki Avery
Bulent Baran
Khaliun Batkhurel
Ritesh Bhandari
Jessica Biesiekierski
Conner Blackmore
Damjana Bogotic
Niamh Buckley
Emma Buckner
Sophie Burn
Rena Cao

Jane Carswell
Aashish Chalasani
Ayushi Chauhan
Winnie Chuck
Pem Chuki
Michael Coffey
Isabella Commins
Declan Connoley
Lloyd Cresswell
Emma Dawson
Alice Day
Stefaan De Clercq
Rebekah de Nys
Prerna Diksha
Maddison Dix
Rebekah Engel
Amirah Etchegaray

Wendy Fang
Eliza Flanagan
Weilun Gao
Paras Garg
Richard Gartrell
Mark Ghali
Hugh Giddings
Tessa Greeve
Zubin Grover
Amanda Hii
Emily Hoedt
Paris Hoey
Shakira Hoque
Helmut Hoss
Gary Huang
Tony Huang
Angharad Hurley

David Huynh
Jason Hwang
Miguel Imperial
Thisun Jayawardana
Angus Jeffrey
Heidi Johnston
Fiona Jones
Danamma Kalavikatte
Elsa Kalluzhathil
Amanda Hii
Emily Hoedt
Paris Hoey
Shakira Hoque
Helmut Hoss
Gary Huang
Tony Huang
Angharad Hurley

Mehul Lamba
Geraldine Laven-Law
Alvin Lee
Raymond Lewandowski III
Tracey Liu
Sarah Lucas
Yulia Lysenko
Xiaomin Ma
Jonathan Makar
Ramy Makary
Aditya Mithanthaya
Alexander Mitropoulos
Hadi Moattar
Georgia Knapp
Tady Kordian
Ramin Kousary
Logan Kratzer

Jessica Nguyen
Robert O'Neill
Sahar Pakneshan
Fei Yang Pan
Arunima Panda
Sara Pasic
Mohan Patil
Desmond Patrick
Lily Pham
Ashok Raj
Arvin Rajandran
Arif Rehman
Sebastian Rodrigues
Peter Rose
Siddarth Sadasivam
Anthony Sakiris
Rajesh Sanjeevi

Crystal Seng
Wing Cheung Wilson Siu
Thomas Skinner
Jin Lin Tan
Andrew Tang
Gareth Walker
Nicholas Wan
Fawn Wong
Peter Wu
William Wu
Kyle Wu
Kwang Chien Yee
Shaanan Yong
Henrik Zhang

Fellowship of GESA Program

Conferral of Fellowship of GESA is a formal and public recognition of sustained and outstanding contributions to the fields of gastroenterology and hepatology in Australia that align with GESA's values or that make a significant contribution to the work of the Society.

The Criteria for FGESA is listed on the GESA website – under board awards.

Applications are considered at GESA Board meetings, and conferral decisions are at the Board's discretion.

GESA will present new Fellows annually at the GESA AGM. New Fellows will receive a certificate and have the distinction of using the postnominal FGESA in their professional activities.

The inaugural Fellowships of GESA were conferred in 2022 to:

- all former GESA Council members and all former and current GESA Board Directors
- all past recipients of the Distinguished Researcher Prize, the Outstanding Clinician Award, the Outstanding Service Award and the Outstanding Mentor Award
- all former and current members of the committees of the CCRTGE, the Recertification in Colonoscopy Program and NETI

- other people who have made a significant contribution to the fields of gastroenterology or hepatology in Australia or to the work or promotion of the values of the Society.

Fellows of GESA 2023

Leon Adams

Golo Ahlenstiel

Robert Bryant

Simon Ghaly

Jessica Howell

Miriam Levy

Vicki Whitehall

Please click [here](#) to find a comprehensive list of Fellowships of GESA

Professional Resources

Professional Resources

GESA resources have been invaluable: 44 patient information fact sheets and 24 evidence based clinical practice guidelines have been published. GESA resources play a vital role in working towards optimising gut and liver health for all Australians.

Patient Resources

Endoscopy Faculty

- Colonoscopy
- Diverticular Disease
- ERCP
- EUS
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
- Gastroscopy

Liver Faculty

- Haemochromatosis

General

- Iron Deficiency

IBD Faculty

- IBD Management Plans for Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis (GP Aware Program)
- Ozanimod for IBD
- Tofacitinib for IBD
- Upadacitinib for IBD
- Ustekinumab for IBD

Clinical Resources

Liver Faculty

Recommendations for the assessment of metabolic dysfunction-associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD) in primary care: a consensus statement (summary of recommendations launched at AGW 2023)

Clinical Practice Guidance on the Diagnosis and Management of Portal Hypertension in Patients with Advanced Liver Disease

Consensus Statement on the role of Transjugular Intrahepatic Portosystemic Shunt (TIPS) in the Management of Portal Hypertension

Endoscopy Faculty

Position Statement on the Role of Bidirectional Endoscopy (same-day upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopy)

Position Statement on Quality Standards in Upper Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

The review of the Infection Prevention and Control in Endoscopy guidelines commenced at the end of 2023 with an updated edition to become available in 2024

Sustainability Network

7 steps to Sustainable Endoscopy

Professional Resources

Acknowledgements

We thank all GESA members, collaborators, Faculty Committee members and the GESA Board who dedicated their time and expertise towards GESA resources in 2023.

Contributors to IBD-related resources:

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Geoff Haar	Jane Smith

Contributors to resources about general topics:

Nigel D'Souza	Lauren Tang
Cherry E Koh	Karen Waller
Simone Strasser	

Contributors to liver-related resources:

Jessica Howell	Will Kemp
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GESA Supporters and Donors

Thank you to the many organisations that have supported our projects, grants, awards, fellowships, guidelines, consensus statements, educational events, meetings and GESA AGW. We appreciate your involvement and contribution to achieving best practice in gastroenterology and hepatology.



Top tier supporters

GESA is a registered charity and is able to accept donations from its members. Donations are tax deductible. Donations support either GESA Members' Donation Philanthropic Grant or GESA Members' Donation Research Award. Allocation of funds is determined by the GESA Board. For more information, please visit gesa.org.au

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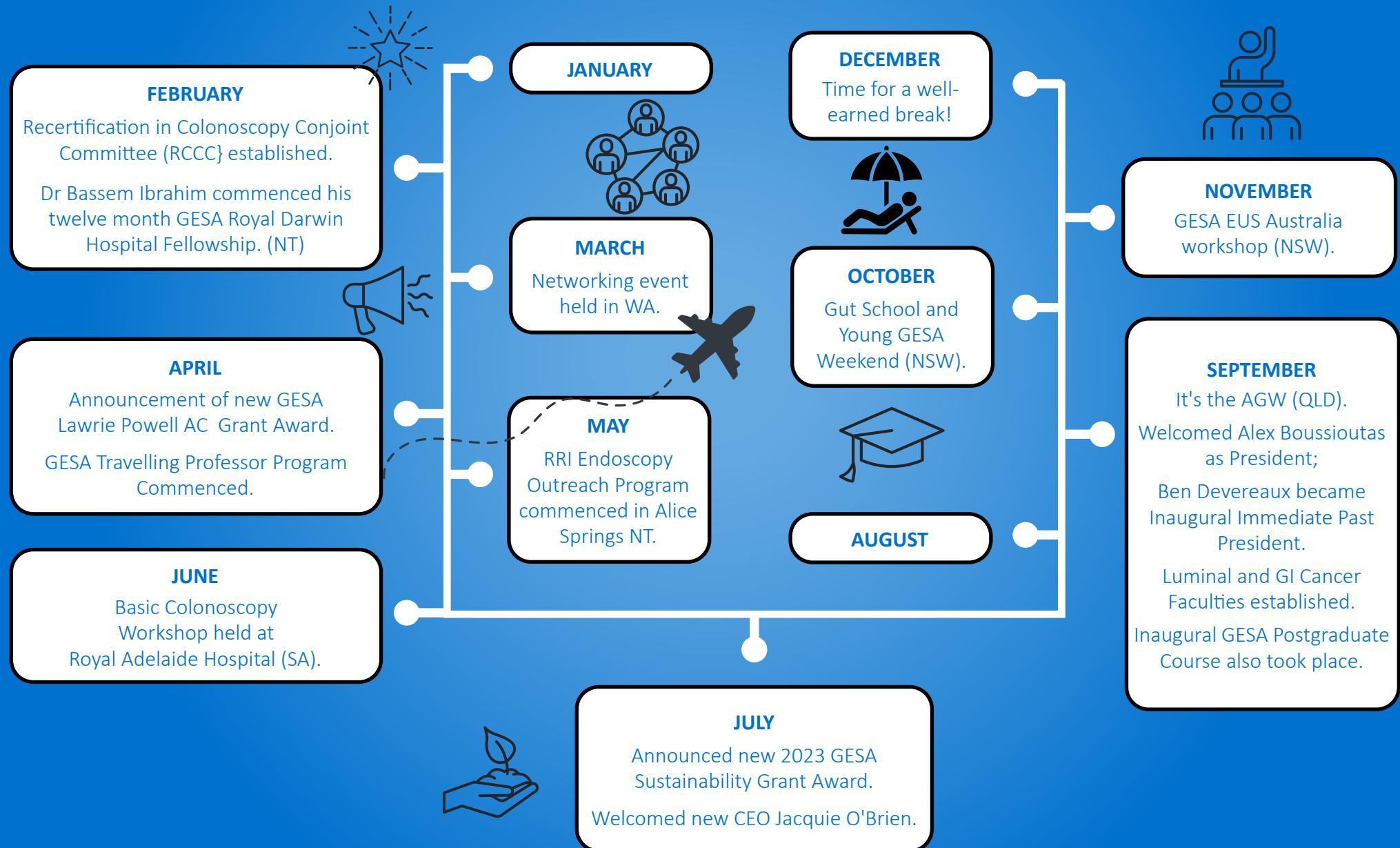
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2023 at a glance





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