



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# MMS Department of Surgery

## Annual Research Showcase

Leadership and research in surgical education

Program

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025

# DOS

SHOWCASE PROGRAM BOOKLET

## LEADERSHIP AND RESEARCH IN SURGICAL EDUCATION



The Department of Surgery Research Committee presents the 2025 DoS Annual Research Showcase. We welcome a stellar line-up of academics and clinicians to present their research.

The 2024 DoS Annual Research Showcase will:

- Showcase research within the department
- Highlight the diverse research journeys
- Engage in a Q&A with audience members
- Promote collaborative opportunities

In this 2025 event, we invite you to explore the evolving landscape of surgical education, where leadership, innovation, and research converge to shape the future of surgical practice.

## Program

---

<b>Event:</b>	Department of Surgery Annual Research Showcase		
<b>Date:</b>	18 November 2025	<b>Time:</b>	1:00pm –6:00pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Woodward Conference Centre, 10th Floor Melbourne Law Building 106 Parkville VIC		
<b>Zoom Link:</b>	<a href="https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/83797794417?pwd=IVpXfkIZP57XXaxbl5SraMqE3tavGD.1">https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/83797794417?pwd=IVpXfkIZP57XXaxbl5SraMqE3tavGD.1</a>		
<b>Password:</b>	402244		
<b>Meeting ID:</b>	83797794417		
<b>Registration:</b>	<a href="#">Click Here</a>		
<b>Enquiries:</b>	michelle.marcola@unimelb.edu.au		

1:00- 1:15 **Registration**

1:15 – 1:25 **Introduction and Acknowledgement of Country**

1:15 – 1:25

**Welcome**

**Prof Peter Choong AO** – Sir Hugh Devine Professor of Surgery/Head, University of Melbourne Department of Surgery/Associate Dean, Innovation & Enterprise, FMDHS/The University of Melbourne

---

<b>SESSION 1</b>	<b>KeyNote 1 and DoS Precinct Presentations</b>	<b>Chairs: Marcos Perini &amp; Sina Babazadeh</b>
------------------	---	---

1:25 – 1:30 **TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH GRANT 2025** Announcement of Awardee 2025

1:30 – 1:50 **Prof Debra Nestel** – *Prof Surgical Education, Austin*

“Surgical education research: Current focus and opportunities”

**Keynote  
Speaker**

---

1:50 – 2:05	<b>Prof Sebastian King</b> – <i>Royal Children Hospital/University of Melbourne</i> “Novel approaches to the understanding and treatment of motility disorders in congenital colorectal patients”	
2.05 – 2.20	<b>Dr Fiona Reid</b> – <i>Western Health/University of Melbourne</i> “Innovation and Inquiry in Surgical Education”	
2.20 – 2.35	<b>Prof Ben Dixon</b> – <i>St Vincent’s Hospital/University of Melbourne</i> “Real-time intelligent monitoring for ongoing surgical education”	
2.35 – 3:00	<b>RHD Rapid Fire 5x5’ Presentations</b>	<b>Chairs: Serena Duchi &amp; James Dimou</b>
	ERC-MCR Presentations Ophthalmology Otolaryngology St Vincent’s Royal Melbourne Austin Northern Western Epworth Peter Mac	
3.00 – 3.30	<b>BREAK AFTERNOON TEA</b>	
<b>SESSION 2</b>	<b>KeyNote 2 and DoS Presentations</b>	<b>Chairs: Luis Alarcon-Martinez &amp; Serena Duchi</b>
3:30 – 3:50 <b>Keynote Speaker</b>	<b>Prof Alistair Royse</b> – <i>Royal Melbourne Hospital/University of Melbourne</i> “The pedagogy behind large-scale online and workshop education”	
3:50 – 4:05	<b>Dr Helen Mohan</b> – <i>Peter Mac/University of Melbourne</i> “Training for the future”	
4:05 – 4:20	<b>A/Prof. Penelope Allen</b> – <i>CERA/University of Melbourne</i> “Educating ophthalmology trainees in surgery and research”	
4.20 – 4:35	<b>Dr Daniel Gould &amp; Dr Aidan Jackson</b> – <i>St Vincent’s Hospital/University of Melbourne</i> “Establishing a collaborative research network across all levels of training: The St Vincent’s Pre-SET Society Experience “	
<b>SESSION 3</b>	<b>Panel Discussion – Challenges and opportunities in surgical education</b>	<b>Chair: Dr Russell Hodgson</b>
4:40 – 5:10	<b>Prof Catherine Green</b> – <i>Otolaryngology-CERA/University of Melbourne</i> <b>Prof Debra Nestel</b> - <i>Prof Surgical Education, Austin</i> <b>Sean Steven</b> - <i>Director of the General And Trauma Surgery Unit at Austin Health</i> <b>Prof Richard de Steiger</b> - <i>Epworth/University of Melbourne</i> <b>Prof Walter Eppich</b> - <i>Professor of Work Integrated Learning Research</i> <i>Department of Medical Education &amp; Collaborative Practice Centre Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences</i>	
5:10– 5:15	<b>Closing Remarks &amp; Rapid-Fire Award</b>	<b>Prof Marcos Perini</b>
5:15 – 6:00	<b>Refreshments</b>	
6:00	<b>Close</b>	

## Speakers

### Professor Debra Nestel



Debra Nestel is Professor of Simulation Education in Healthcare, Monash University, and Professor of Surgical Education, Department of Surgery, University of Melbourne, Australia.

She is program lead for the Graduate Programs in Clinical Simulation (Monash University) and the Graduate Programs in Surgical Education (University of Melbourne). Debra leads a national faculty development program for simulation practitioners – NHET-Sim.

Debra also leads an international simulated patient network. Debra's education and research activities have three overlapping strands: simulation as an educational method; surgical education; and faculty development. Debra's research has been cited over 14K times and she has an h-index of 59. Debra has published over 250 peer-reviewed papers in health professions education and edited five books and a major reference work.

In 2021, Debra received the award of Member of the Order of Australia for her service to healthcare simulation. She has received other national awards for her work in education and healthcare simulation including a Presidential Citation from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare. Debra was founding Editor-in-Chief, *Advances in Simulation* and has been Editor-in-Chief of *BMJ STEL*. She is now Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Healthcare Simulation*.

### Professor Sebastian King



Professor Sebastian King established the Colorectal and Pelvic Reconstruction Service at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Following his PhD, which focused upon the motility patterns of children affected by slow transit constipation, Sebastian completed his paediatric surgical training at The Royal Children's Hospital. He then underwent his fellowship in neonatal surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada.

Sebastian's clinical role is focused upon children born with anorectal malformations or Hirschsprung disease, and those affected by chronic constipation. His ongoing research is supported by The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Medical Research Future Fund and the Australian Federal Government.

## **Dr Fiona Reid**



Dr Fiona Reid is a colorectal and general surgeon based at Western Health and a surgical educator affiliated with the University of Melbourne. She is the Director of Clinical Training for surgery and clinical lead for robotic colorectal surgery for Western Health, and serves as Medical Advisor for the Department of Anatomy at the University of Melbourne. Fiona has pioneered structured prevocational surgical education programs, developed surgical simulation laboratories and in-situ surgical simulation. Her recent work integrates adult learning theory with surgical training reform, the relationship of education and equity and she continues to advocate for evidence-based, inclusive models of surgical education in Australia

## **Professor Ben Dixon**



Professor Ben Dixon is the Garnett Passe & Rodney Williams Professor of Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery at the University of Melbourne and the Director of ENT Head & Neck Surgery at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne. He is the Head & Neck Research and Education Lead for the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre Alliance.

Prof Dixon has a PhD in surgeon-computer interface design and continues research into the integration of technology into the operating theatre. His areas of expertise and clinical research include Head & Neck and Skull Base Malignancy, including combining robotic and endoscopic surgical management with open techniques.

## Professor Alistair Royse AM



Professor Alistair Royse AM is Professor of Surgery at the University of Melbourne and a practicing cardiothoracic surgeon at Royal Melbourne and Melbourne Private Hospitals. He is recognised for his work in total arterial coronary bypass grafting and the integration of ultrasound into clinical training. As co-director of the Ultrasound Education Group, the largest provider of clinical ultrasound training to medical practitioners in Australia. As co-director of the Mobile Learning Unit, he has driven novel education techniques and platforms. With over 275 peer-reviewed publications, he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2025.

## Dr Helen Mohan



Dr. Helen Mohan is an Irish-trained clinician-researcher and surgical educator based in Melbourne, Australia. She is a Consultant Surgical Oncologist, Robotic and Colorectal Surgeon at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Austin Health. A first-class honours graduate of University College Dublin (2007), she completed surgical training with the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland and moved to Australia in 2021 for fellowship training in robotic and advanced cancer surgery.

Her clinical focus includes robotic colorectal surgery, cytoreductive surgery with HIPEC, and pelvic exenteration. She is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne, Section Editor for *Journal of Robotic Surgery*, and serves on the colorectal advisory board for *EJSO*. Dr. Mohan has authored over 120 peer-reviewed publications with an H-index of 30.

She leads robotic surgical education as Director of Clinical Research at the International Medical Robotics Academy (IMRA), where she established a graduate research program on adaptive training in minimally invasive surgery. A former President of the Association of Surgeons in Training (UK & Ireland, 2017), she has contributed significantly to colorectal education through ACPGIBI and collaborative groups like ISRC and ICORC. She holds both FRCSI and FRACS, a PhD, and diplomas in clinical leadership and OBGYN.

## Associate Professor Penelope Allen



A/Prof Penelope Allen is a vitreoretinal surgeon with a strong research interest in retinal prostheses, retinal detachment surgery and endophthalmitis. She is an active clinician and is Head of the Vitreoretinal Unit at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. A/Prof Allen has earned an impressive international reputation for her work as a Principal Investigator with Bionic Vision Australia (BVA; 2010-2017), leading the surgical team at the Centre for Eye Research Australia on developing a retinal prosthesis for people with end-stage inherited retinal disease. This work has resulted in multiple patents on which A/Prof Allen is named as an inventor and two successful clinical trials (primarily ARC- and NHMRC-funded) that have shown device safety and efficacy out to 2-years post implantation. The latest clinical trial was completed in 2021 and she continues to work in this area building on those clinical trial outcomes.

She has also been a Chief Investigator on an award-winning NHMRC Development grant (2016-2020) to develop a minimally invasive therapeutic stimulation device for earlier stage inherited retinal disease. She is currently the Principal

Investigator of the Bionic Eye Research Unit at the Centre for Eye Research Australia and oversees a team of post-doctoral fellows, research assistants and orientation and mobility specialists in running preclinical studies and clinical trials of bionic devices, as well as research regarding retinal detachment surgery and endophthalmitis.

She is a mentor for Accredited Ophthalmology trainees and supervisor of the registrars allocated to the Vitreoretinal Unit at RVEEH.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology recognised A/Prof Allen with a Distinguished Service Medal in 2024 for her work in research and teaching in Ophthalmology.

## Dr Daniel Gould



I am a PGY-3 orthopaedic resident at St Vincent's. My goal is to become an academic orthopaedic surgeon. To this end, I was fortunate enough to obtain a research fellowship, 0.2FTE alongside clinical work, at the Royal Children's Hospital as a Bob Dickens Research Fellow in Paediatric Orthopaedics. My work primarily involves designing a randomised controlled trial to determine the efficacy of postoperative tranexamic acid in reducing blood loss in hip reconstruction surgery for children with cerebral palsy.

My PhD thesis, completed in 2023 and conferred in 2024, centred around developing a risk prediction tool for readmission after total knee replacement, an outcome which disrupts the patient's recovery and places additional burden on the healthcare system. I used machine learning and statistical models combined with clinical knowledge of risk factors, worked with a consumer advocate throughout my thesis, and explored stakeholder perspectives through a qualitative interview study with knee replacement patients as well as through a study in which I compared the

predictive tool to orthopaedic surgeons.

I am passionate about sparking and fostering research interest amongst junior doctors, as well as sharing the lessons I've learned in the hope that it will help other become better researchers.

## Dr Aidan Jackson



Dr Aidan Jackson is the current Chief Surgical Resident at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and an aspiring academic surgeon. He is thoroughly involved in clinical research, having completed a Master of Clinical Research through the University of Melbourne as part of his Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree. Now as a surgical resident, he is keenly interested in remaining up-to-date, speaking and participating in regular clinical research conferences and workshops, as well as assisting the next generation of researchers to become involved and inspired.

## **Dr Catherine Green AO**



Catherine is an ophthalmic surgeon and educator based in Melbourne. She was Head of the Glaucoma Unit at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital for over a decade and works in private practice with a focus on glaucoma and cataract surgery. She has served as the Dean of Education for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) and Associate Professor and Deputy Director of the Monash Institute for Health and Clinical Education (MIHCE). Throughout her career, she has held education, governance and leadership roles for national and international ophthalmic organisations, including RANZCO, the Centre for Eye Research Australia, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the International Council of Ophthalmology and the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO). In 2017, she was recognised as an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to ophthalmology as a clinician, through executive roles with national and international

professional groups, to research and education, and to eye health care programs in the Asia-Pacific.

As well as pursuing her interests in glaucoma, public health, education and international development, Catherine played a pivotal role in establishing and co-ordinating the Leadership Development Programs of RANZCO and the APAO. She is a passionate advocate of diversity and inclusion, making a significant contribution to highlighting in all the organisations in which she works the importance of this issue and its role in effecting positive cultural change.

## **Dr Sean Stevens**



Sean is a General Surgeon and the Director of the General And Trauma Surgery Unit at Austin Health, Melbourne, Australia.

Sean is passionate about improving surgical education across the continuum from medical students to consultants. He has previously completed a Master of Surgical Education and is the current Clinical Supervisor for Surgery at the Austin Clinical School, University of Melbourne and the Supervisor of Pre-vocational Surgical Training at Austin Health.

Sean recently undertook a Churchill Fellowship to investigate international advances in the use of simulation in surgery. Sean is currently undertaking a PhD with the University of Melbourne's Department of Surgery investigating the use of simulation-based interprofessional education in surgery.

## Professor Richard de Steiger



Professor Richard de Steiger MBBS PhD FRACS FA OrthA is the Epworth, Victor Smorgon Chair of Surgery, The University of Melbourne, and for 17 years was the Deputy Director of the Australian Orthopaedic Association, National Joint Replacement Registry. He completed his fellowship training in orthopaedic surgery in Melbourne and studied for several years at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford, and was an AO fellow in Bern, Switzerland. He was awarded the prestigious ABC Travelling Fellowship in 1998 and obtained his PhD in the School of Public Health, Adelaide University in 2018.

Prof de Steiger's current research interests include outcomes of joint replacement surgery, particularly periprosthetic joint infection, data linkage, robotic knee replacement surgery and mechanisms involved in the cause of knee osteoarthritis. He has given over 300 International and National peer-reviewed presentations with 78 as an invited plenary speaker. His publications have over 7,100 citations and his H-Index is 42, He has been teaching undergraduate medical students and orthopaedic training registrars for over 30 years.

## Professor Walter Eppich



Prof Walter Eppich is a pediatric emergency doctor, educator, and researcher with a passion for helping teams unlock their collaborative potential and optimize their performance in high-pressure environments. He builds on a 20-year clinical career dedicated to caring for children and families dealing with life-threatening illness and injury. His international teaching and research focusses on how to help teams across diverse sectors enhance performance and learn from adversity to emerge more capable and resilient. He studies the intersections between simulation and workplace learning with a focus on interprofessional collaborative practice, team reflection, and conversational learning. He has traveled to Antarctica to study how scientific teams adapt to ever changing conditions in this harsh environment and ensure mission success. His research seeks to delineate the contribution of healthcare debriefings, workplace talk, and team interactions to collaborative learning and performance. He has co-authored over 150 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters