

ISSUE 5: DECEMBER 2025

# PSA PASIFIKA PULSE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bula Vinaka PSA members and supporters!  
A very warm season's greeting to you all!

As the year 2025 draws to an end, I wish to thank all PSA members and associates for the ongoing support for the executive committee's activities for the year.

This 5th edition marks Pasifika Pulses one year anniversary since its revival in December of 2024. Pasifika Pulse has successfully archived its key purpose of uniting the PSA community through its communication platform. The newsletter's regular features highlighting member country updates, trainee achievements and individual contributions of anaesthetist's work within the region has been a source of inspiration to all its members.

The PSA community continues to be among the Pacific Islands longest serving medical association. PSA has defied all odds, surviving a global pandemic, member challenges of geographical isolation, communication difficulties and financial woes. It's members dedication and commitments, together with that of its core support sister-society's (Australian Society of anaesthetists and the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists) have seen the success of the association. It is only together dear members will the PSA community continue to prosper.

It is therefore my great pleasure to inform all members that the PSA's annual scientific conference will take place on August 31st to September 4th, 2026, in Fiji. The committee is working on organising an exciting program filled with informative educational sessions and hands on workshops under the theme of Leadership. We look forward to seeing all our member countries in attendance, particularly members who have not been in attendance for past conferences. We also welcome our anaesthesia support groups who may be interested in joining us on this week of learning.

On behalf of the executive PSA committee and the Pasifika Pulse editorial group I wish you all a blessed festive season and hope you enjoy this 5th milestone edition.

Faiaksia  
Eunice



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## COUNTRY FEATURE - SOLOMON ISLANDS

### Islands

The Solomon Islands are an archipelago consisting of over 900 Islands and a population of 760,000. It has 6 main islands in which each has a Mini –Hospital but has only one Tertiary Referral Hospital located in Honiara – Guadalcanal Province. The National Referral Hospital located in Honiara is the only Tertiary Hospital providing speciality Services for the Country receiving referrals across the Islands.

### Services:

Full Anaesthetic services are provided only in the Tertiary Hospital and these include – General Anaesthetic Services – for General Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, ENT and Dental. Anaesthesia consults extend to the management of critically ill patients providing support to other departments. Beginning this year – a Pre-operative Clinic once a week where high risk cases are reviewed and assessed before proceeding with surgery. Anaesthetic services is also provided to pediatric patients requiring Endoscopy and or CT scan imaging.

The Solomon Islands does not have ICU capabilities so any critically ill patient that requires our support is managed in the acute wards. There is also an outreach of one-week surgical tours to the 6 main Islands - for General Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology and support overseas visiting team. Apart from the clinical duties, the team is involved in teaching and training for the registrars and interns who spend 8 weeks in the department as part of their rotation.

### Manpower & Trainings:

Currently there are three Anaesthetist Specialists and Seven Registrars providing anaesthesia services in Solomon Islands assisted by Six (6) Anaesthetic Nurses. The three registrar trainees are currently doing Postgraduate Training in Fiji at the Fiji National University.

### Current Status:

Currently the Operating Theatre is under renovation with some upgrade works that has been happening as early as this year. Theatre services is currently being provided through makeshift theatre consisting of – Three operating rooms (one room for elective surgery, one room for emergency surgery and one room for Minor Cases).



Fig 1: Makeshift Operating Theatre (Left) and the Operating Theatre currently under renovation (Right)

Due to the limited operating room space and an increase in surgical cases, the elective room procedures run from 8am to 9pm. This is made possible through a roster throughout all the operating staff cadre to help lessen the surgical waiting list.

Recently the Chinese government help built a “Comprehensive Medical Centre (CMC)” – a specialized medical center for urology, nephrology and cardiology capabilities. Included here are a Urology operating theatre and a 3 bed ICU suite. The urology theatre functions once a week. We still cannot fully utilize this medical center due to lack of human resources to man the theatre full time and the ICU.

In the current make-shift theatre the average case load is 250 cases per month (emergency and elective cases). Emergency cases consist of 60 % of the case load and Elective 40 %.

Like any other Pacific Island, we do a wide range and mix of cases - from neonates to geriatric patients – putting to good use the limited resources available and providing quality care to patients. Majority of cases (both elective & emergency) is from the Obstetrics & Gynaecology followed by General Surgery, orthopedics and others



Fig 2 : The operating Theatre in the CMC that performs general and minimal invasive urology cases.



Fig 3 : SAFE Obstetrics & Paediatric Courses sponsored by ANZCA.

### Trainings & Collaborations 2025

The A-team in the Solomons is blessed to have three trainees in training this year. These trainees in FNU and ongoing collaborations with ASA, NZSA, ANZCA and colleagues from the Chinese government is crucial for continuous learning and re-learning – overall contributing to improving anaesthesia services in the Solomon Islands.



Fig 4: Leadership Workshop by Dr Chris Bowden



Fig 5 : Annual Registrar’s Refresher Course by Dr Phil Blum and Dr Meg Walmsley.

## Visiting Teams

There were four visiting teams providing surgical services this year and these visiting teams have been instrumental and capacity building initiatives not only through teaching but through clinical attachment during the visit.

The Paediatric team from JJF Canberra visited twice and during the first visit there were two anaesthetist – one specifically doing trainings for our registrars during the week.

The Orthopedic hand visiting team from Gold Coast- also supported the local team with teaching and training in regional Anaesthesia. In 2024, the Anaesthetist Dr Thomas Mathiesson donated a portable USS that tremendously helped with regional anaesthesia. This year – he donated a Sono site USS which is a step up in our regional anaesthesia services.

The Neuro visiting team from the Aelan Neuro surgical team also provided trainings with the team on Intravenous Anaesthesia and donated us a TCI pump on their last visit in 2023 in which we are able to do Intravenous Anaesthesia on few of our sick head injury patients.



Fig 6: Dr Nick Goulding doing Registrar's training during the Paediatric Visit.



Fig 7 : Dr Thomas Mathiesson teaching one of our registrar a Supraclavicular Block.

The JJF Gynae team from Canberra also provided teaching and clinical attachment training for our registrars on epidural anaesthesia and combine Fentanyl & Morphine on spinal anaesthesia in which now is practiced on our patients.



Fig 8: TCI pump donated by the Aelan Neuro Visiting team.

## Future Vision:

The future vision for the anaesthesia services in the Solomon Islands is focused on providing quality, safe and accessible care to all citizens through:

1. Develop a sustainable workforce – advocate for training opportunities for more anaesthetist for quality care, expansion of services and ensure anaesthesia services are available and accessible to all regardless of the location.
2. Education and training – strengthen collaborations and provide ongoing education and training for anaesthesia professionals.
3. Improve of infrastructure, equipment and protocols – to improve standard and quality of care
4. Improve database - for research and evidence base to justify the need for ongoing support to the department.



## PACIFIC PARTICIPATION AT THE ASA NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE 2025

The Overseas Development and Education Committee (ODEC) of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists invited and sponsored Dr Eunice Onisimo, Anaesthetist Specialist and PSA president from Lautoka Hospital -Fiji and Dr Delwyn Pitakoe, Anaesthetist Specialist from The National Referral Hospital – Solomon Islands to attend the Australian Society of Anaesthetists National Scientific Conference 2025 (ASA NSC25) from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October in Canberra.

The sessions and presentations at the conference offers an opportunity for learning the insights of anaesthesia practices and advancements in anaesthesia, and professional development especially on leadership skills. It also offers networking opportunities connecting with international anaesthesia communities.

Dr Eunice Onisimo and Dr Delwyn Pitakoe did presentations during the ODEC sessions sharing their work and experiences in their respective Countries.

Thank you to the ODEC/ASA for providing opportunities for Pacific participants to attend the ASA NSC 25. We are grateful for the chance to learn, network and share our experiences. The support strengthens global anaesthesia Collaboration that will benefit our anaesthesia communities.



*Dr Eunice Onisimo (Specialist & PSA President) and Dr Delwyn Pitakoe (Specialist) with Dr Vida Viliunas OAM (ASA President elect)*



*ODEC session – PSA Participants with Dr Meg Walmsley (session chair, Deputy chair ODEC) and Dr Joel Silari (Specialist from PNG society)*



## REFLECTIONS FROM THE NZSA ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2025

It has been an honor and blessing to attend the New Zealand Society of Anaesthesia (NZSA) annual scientific meeting (ASM) in Hamilton City, New Zealand. This was made possible through the financial support and guidance of the NZSA Global Health committee.

The opening day of conference with Prof Jamie Sleigh giving the Alan Merry Oratory – was a beautiful summary of decades of work in anaesthesia. One who has mastered the science and art of sleep medicine only to acknowledge that the small things like showing compassion, understanding patients' issues and showing love to patients does go a long way. In the same session – the presentation on “improving patient care across Africa”. One would think that a low post-operative mortality rate (POMR) would mean excellent perioperative care rather in the case of the African continent – patients did not get to receive the urgent surgery that was needed.

I attended a workshop on “Leadership and Resilience, decreasing stress as a healthcare professional”. This certainly provided me insight and pointers to improve on whilst dealing with stress, problem-solving and managing tasks on a day-to-day basis. Pointers such as ruminating, emotional inhibition, toxic achiever, sensitivity and flexibility. The last session of “into the abyss” – explored areas of perioperative covert stroke and how can anaesthesia learn from stroke management and the approach to postoperative delirium.





The Friday session on “All that breathes” was interesting to note pointers on the use of AFOI – not only on the anatomically anticipated difficult airway but also on the physiologically difficult airway. Looking forward to the upcoming PUMA guidelines on Extubation which is planned to be released early next year. The session on “the verdict” took on issues of managing adult behaviors, lessons from the health and disability commission and the legal issues surrounding adult behaviors in the hospital.

Saturday morning session on “Wayne’s world” was not only entertaining from the chairs of the session (Drs Wayne Morris & Alan Goodey) but also eye-opening to most of the audience. The presenters were vast in that they covered work in Africa (Madagascar on the Mercy ship), surgery in Cambodia and Open-heart mission to Fiji and the Anaesthesia workforce in the Pacific. Drs Meg Walmsley and Sweta Mudliar presented in this session.

The social events planned was beautiful and was an opportunity to catch up with colleagues and meet new ones. Particularly special for me was the Saturday conference dinner. A definite fan of “The Lord of the Rings Trilogy” and to combine it with an anaesthesia conference was a highlight. To tour the “Shire”, drink its locally crafted beer and heaps of feasting “Hobbit style” was above super.

# WHO 76<sup>TH</sup> WPRO MEETING



The Pacific Society of Anaesthetist (PSA) has been privileged to represent the World Federation Society of Anaesthesiology (WFSA) at the recent World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Regional office (WPRO) 76<sup>th</sup> Regional Committee Meeting (RCM). The meeting was held in Denarau, Nadi from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and was co-hosted by WHO & the Fijian Government. The WFSA delegation was a 3-member team with Dr Kartik Mudliar as the lead delegate and Dr Enele Tuima and Dr Maurice Atalifo as observers.

The traditional weaving of mats in the Pacific is used in the WHO WPRO 2025 to 2029 strategic planning focusing on themes like advancing primary health care, climate change and health system resilience and strengthening health security. Collaborative efforts from members states and the associated partners will help weave the WHO WPRO mat of “Health for families, communities & societies”.

WFSA had drafted a statement on “Climate Change and Health System Resilience” – but this was not to read out. This is due to time constraints, thus WFSA reps were advised that the statement was made available on the WHO WPRO website. The statement by WFSA encourages member states to consider surge preparedness in times of severe natural disaster weather patterns, decommission the use of piped nitrous and avoid the use of desflurane.

The WFSA also drafted a statement on “Safe Surgery” – which was read out by Dr Kartik to the meeting – 3 priorities were recommended to member states: Integrate emergency, critical and operative care in national health plans, strengthen leadership & governance at facility level and invest in the anaesthesia workforce.



# PSA REPRESENTATION AT THE PISA/RACS/G4 MEETING



The combined PISA/RACS/G4 meeting was one of its kind for the region bringing together the specialties of surgery, obstetrics, anaesthesia and emergency medicine. The Pacific Island Surgical Association (PISA) in conjunction with the Royal Australian College of Surgery (RACS) and the G4 Global Alliance – had this meeting in Suva, Fiji from 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025. Participation and representation at this meeting were mainly countries within the WHO western pacific region and from outside such as those from Pakistan and the USA. The 1<sup>st</sup> 2 days of the meeting were mainly discussing PISA issues and the other 3 days were on G4 global alliance topics.

The theme for the week was “ECO Care Equity in the Asia-Pacific Region”. Following months of weekly zoom program planning, Dr Maurice made recommendations to the G4 and PISA program planning and had anaesthesia representatives present. Dr Maurice himself presented on “Anaesthesia in the Pacific” and highlighted what PSA is doing as a society with clinical practice and sustainability. Workforce issues within the PSA region were quantified, how PSA is dealing with it and what the future is looking like for skilled anaesthesia workforce in the region.



On climate change and surge preparedness – Dr Asela presented on “FEMAT”. This is the Fiji Emergency Medical Assistance Team – initially accredited by the WHO in 2016 and re-accredited in 2025 to be a level 1 capability medical team. On sustainability and resilient health systems – Mrs. Udila presented on the Fiji Oxygen program. A background of nursing, Mrs. Udila is the National Oxygen Coordinator in Fiji and with Dr Luke Nasedra been the brains behind this project. Mrs. Udila presented on the progress of the oxygen program and the solarization of rural health facilities in Fiji and the aim of having of an oxygen concentrator in these facilities.

Lastly, Professor Eugenie Kayak from the Melbourne University – an advocate for sustainable health policy also presented in the meeting. She presented on “Sustainable health care – pathways and opportunities” and “On the background of what is known – sustainable health care”. Also present was Professor Forbes McGain (an Intensivist and another sustainable health care advocate). The final day of the meeting was discussion on health financing and sustainable ways to maintain projects and future meetings in the region. Resolutions were tabled and a summary was collated by the G4 team, and this will be circulated later in email correspondence.



## HYPERBARIC WORKSHOP – 2025 UPDATE

The hyperbaric team recently held a week of workshop and collaboration with all entities involved in the dive industry. This was from November 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> at the Southern Cross Hotel in Suva. The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 days was on diving medicine and the last 2 days was a first of its kind – a multi-stake holder meeting.

The 3-day workshop included health clinicians (doctors and nurses), allied health (physiotherapy, biomedical engineers and anaesthesia technicians) and dive colleagues from the navy dive team. The learning and teaching of diving medicine were interactive followed with excursions to the different worksites – Navy base in Togalevu, Air Is Us office in Pacific Harbor and the hyperbaric chamber in CWMH – gratitude to the management of these work sites for allowing the participants to visit the facilities.

The last 2 days of multi-stake holder meeting saw colleagues from the Fiji Tourism sector, Dive Fiji association, water authority, the Ministry of Fisheries, OHS team from the Ministry of Employment and the Police Dive team joining the participants as per above. It is ascertained that “dive tourism” is an integral contributor to the Fijian Tourism sector and the economy. To make these divers feel safe in Fiji, the hyperbaric chamber and its services is essential. However, the pattern of dive injuries in Fiji are related to illegal activities among the local divers – particularly diving for beach-de-mer, the pearl diving and the illegal fishing subgroups with improper diving gear.

Work has been started and championed by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Employment to make these dive related work safe and at the same time allow for local divers to maintain their income and support their families. It is also agreed from the multi-stake holder meeting that education and ongoing collaboration is key to create awareness and make diving in Fiji safe and injury free.





## FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY - THE YEAR THAT WAS!

Bula Vinaka,

As the year ends, we would like to take this time to thank our Diploma and Masters students for the effort and work they have put into the academic year that was 2025. Their hard work culminated in the end of year exams, a gruelling collection of a written paper, Medical and Anaesthesia vivas, an Investigations Vivas, and the “Clinical Long cases” all spread out over a week.

This year there were nine Diploma and five Masters students from Fiji and the region sitting their qualifying exams, one of the largest numbers yet. Their stellar performance was an encouraging indicator of the quality of anaesthesia and critical care that we hope to nurture for Fiji and the Pacific Region.



We would also like to say a big Vinaka Vakalevu to our board of examiners Dr Justin Burke, Dr Anne Drake, and Dr Rob McDougall who again graciously donated their time and expertise, alongside our faculty counterpart Dr Kenton Biribo in assessing our postgraduate students. For some of the students this was their first introduction to them but for many of us they have been constant mentor figures in the Pacific.

We would also like to thank Dr Ieli Fakraufon and Dr Anisi Kavoa for accommodating us in their respective busy units for the interactive Vivas and clinical exams. We would also like to say Vinaka Vakalevu to the Regional and local honorary supervisors who throughout the year have ensured that our trainees remain skilled, compassionate and ethical. Without them our FNU team would not be able to carry out our goals and objectives, and we acknowledge the vital role they play. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to ANSZCA, ASA, NZSA for their continued support and guidance towards our students and our faculty.

For the Nine Graduating Masters of Anaesthesia students, Congratulations on your achievements and we wish you the very best as you endeavour into the next chapter of your professional careers. It has been a pleasure being a part of your academic journey.

*From Dr Lisa, Sherene, Kenton, Kartik and Apaitia we here at FNU would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy holidays.*

**Moce Mada!**



# UPCOMING EVENTS



**WCA**  **15-19 APRIL 2026**  
19th World Congress  
of Anaesthesiologists  
MADRID • MADRID

**2026**  
15-19  
APRIL  
#WCA2026

## REGISTRATION OPEN

Early Bird Deadline: **21 January 2026**





## PSA CONFERENCE

Conference Dates: August 31st to September 4th 2026  
Venue to be confirmed