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## Surgeons Head to the Alice for Annual Scientific Meeting

**Wednesday 22 August, 2018**

'Infection: From head to toe' will be the focus as surgeons from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia gather in Alice Springs for the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Annual Scientific Meeting.

The event will take place from 23-31 August and will be held at the Double Tree Hilton, which will be the meeting place for approximately 100 Fellows, Trainees and Associates who will take part in a number of interesting discussions and presentations.

Local surgeon and the meeting convenor, Dr Ollapallil (Jacob) Jacob, said that while the issues discussed during the meeting will be particularly pertinent to Alice Springs, the meeting will also have plenty to offer his colleagues travelling to attend the conference.

"In the last three years we have seen a dramatic rise in soft tissue infections here in Alice Springs – not just simple infections, but more serious infections, like life threatening head and neck infections. We do have a lot of varied cases, particularly trauma and pancreatitis, but soft tissue infections completely overshadow anything else we do."

"In advanced countries generally greater economic and social advances have seen reductions in infectious diseases and nutritional deficiencies, and a corresponding increase in non-communicable diseases like diabetes and heart diseases. The great Alice Springs dilemma is that unfortunately we have high incidences of both diabetes and heart diseases, and also infection related admissions."

"Some of the common infections that we see here, like necrotising fasciitis, are not very common in the cities. When they do present themselves it is very important to treat them appropriately."

"For example, the mortality rate for necrotising fasciitis in Alice Springs is around about eight percent, whereas elsewhere it is more like twenty percent. That is because we can identify it early and treat it early from the start. So I think this is very much a relevant theme that participants can engage with because there is a lot we can learn off of each other."

The event will feature a number of distinguished speakers, as well as an opening night symposium on 'The Changing Face of Infectious Disease,' hosted by the Australian and New Zealand Audit of Surgical Mortality.

Highlights of the event include;

- The Henry Windsor Lecture to be delivered by decorated military surgeon, Associate Professor Susan Neuhaus.
- A keynote presentation from local vascular surgeon, Mr Mark Hamilton, an expert on the diabetic foot.
- Dr Bart Currie, a well-known infectious disease physician based in Darwin who will be delivering a keynote presentation on tropical infections in the north

### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

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