



The Royal Australian and New Zealand
College of Radiologists®

Engage + Inform + Influence = Outcome



Policy and Advocacy in Action

January - June 2023

How the College influences Government and
other stakeholders on behalf of members

President's Message

Together we are stronger.

Welcome to this first edition of Policy and Advocacy in Action, a bi-annual report that provides a concise overview of the depth and breadth of RANZCR's efforts in advocating on behalf of members, patients, and the profession.

Our purpose is to be transparent about the diverse and multiple activities we undertake to influence and help shape the policy and practice landscape, by reporting on our progress and the impacts on patients and on members' daily clinical practice. In short, this report seeks to answer the question - what does the policy and advocacy work of the College deliver. The short answer is, a lot.

Now for the longer response.

Advocacy is a strategic priority for the College and is reflected in the [2022-24 Strategic Plan](#). The overarching aim is to influence government and other decision-makers to support quality, outcome-driven services to patients in a constantly changing environment.

Members are the lifeblood of the College. We listen to and hear members' concerns, issues, and needs which for the most part, rarely occur in isolation and are directly affected by political and policy imperatives. It is therefore vital that RANZCR represents members with one clear and authoritative voice to the highest levels of government and to other stakeholders. Having a seat at the table is critical.

The College has built and maintained constructive relationships with governments in both Australia and New Zealand, consumer organisations and the wider medical/health sectors for over 80 years, placing us in a strong strategic position to work on behalf of our members.

Change rarely happens overnight. It takes time, sometimes years, and requires a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the issues, points of resistance and the means by which to navigate them towards a successful conclusion.

RANZCR has successfully established its credibility as a trusted partner in public policy, where our opinion, advice and recommendations are sought, heard, and acted upon – as you will see in this report. Each and every one of you could make an impact on the future of radiology and radiation oncology beyond our clinical roles, by participating in this work whether

through committees, special interest groups or other College initiatives.

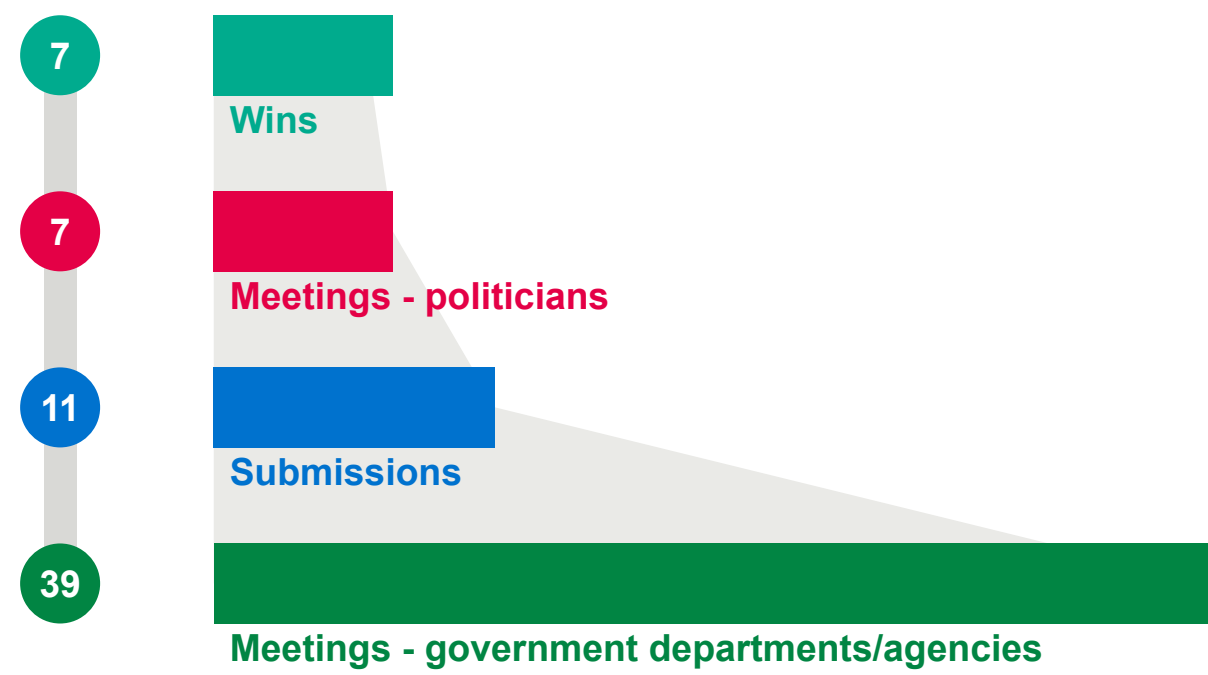
I hope that by sharing the depth and breadth of our policy and advocacy efforts, you will have a greater appreciation of the extent to which the College is working on your behalf to ensure the health and strength of the professions, and the individuals who comprise it.

RANZCR President Clin A/Prof Sanjay Jeganathan



Snapshot and Highlights

1 in every 6.5 meetings resulted in a win



Ahead of the game in the AI space

Determining how best to manage and regulate Artificial Intelligence in Medicine



The Regional & Rural Training Pathway (RRTP)

Pilot program funded by Federal government to address areas of workforce need



New Zealand pre-election submission

Boosting funding of radiation oncology training places secured prior to election

Political Engagement

Promoting and protecting our profession in a complex policy landscape

With a health and public policy landscape that spans two countries, multiple jurisdictions and numerous states and territories, the challenges of RANZCR's advocacy work cannot be over-stated.

Navigating this intricate terrain is often a delicate balancing act of dealing with the nitty gritty issues of the day, whilst still keeping sight of the big picture. It requires long-term and short-term thinking; a readiness to form alliances; a sophisticated understanding of the shifting sands of the political climate; and an ability to recognise and seize windows of opportunity when they arise.

Political engagement is vital.

RANZCR is bipartisan. We regularly meet with politicians, bureaucrats and other political decision-makers in both Australia and New Zealand to ensure our

concerns are at the top of the political agenda.

This engagement establishes the College as a trusted organisation, enabling us to raise issues, discuss solutions and ensure that the needs of members are understood and heard.

So what does this look like in practice?

RANZCR leads the conversation about medical imaging and cancer care in Australia and New Zealand.

Our advocacy is guided by the strategic priorities articulated in RANZCR's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan and involves a continuing dialogue with members, political decision makers and other stakeholders; producing robust evidence-based position papers and submissions; and ultimately influencing policies that support quality, outcome-driven services.



New Zealand



The upcoming 2023 New Zealand election has been a major focus for our advocacy efforts, with priorities outlined in RANZCR's 2023 [Election Priorities](#) submission.

The submission called for urgent investment in the medical workforce that supports radiation oncology services in New Zealand, and a request for retention strategies that keep New Zealand trained radiation oncologists in New Zealand.

RANZCR is also calling for investment in a high-functioning, nationally interoperable Radiology Information System/Picture Archiving and Communication System (RIS/PACS).

With our bipartisan approach, we continue to meet with all major political parties to advocate these priorities, seeking an election commitment, and regularly engage with the Ministry of Health to foster strong relationships with key bureaucrats as well as the political arm of Government.

2023 New Zealand pre-election successes

We are encouraged that the Government has already confirmed an additional 15 radiology and 5 radiation oncology training places and has also agreed to fund the radiation oncology Fellowships we called for, to help retain clinicians in New Zealand.

Other Government Agencies

- Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand
- Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa, Medical Council New Zealand
- Te Toihau Hauora, Hauatanga Health and Disability Commissioner
- He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora, Accident and Compensation Corporate
- Te Aho o Te Kahu, Cancer Control Agency



Australia



2023 Pre-budget Submission

RANZCR submitted a [2023 Pre-budget Submission](#) calling for:

- Deregulation of MRI for metropolitan areas
- Breast-marker clip funding under Medicare
- Reinstatement of ROHPG funding for brachy therapy
- GP referral access to Uterine Fibroid Embolisation
- [Rural and Regional training pathway](#).

We met with key politicians including Shadow Minister Senator Anne Ruston, Shadow Assistant Regional Health Minister Dr Anne Webster MP, Dr Mike Freeland MP, Policy Advisor and Workforce Advisor to Health Minister Butler to advocate the patient benefit of our pre-budget submission priorities and to also discuss the Regional and Rural Training Pathway, a review of AMC and CPD Homes.

All MPs and Senators received a copy of our Pre-budget Submission.

Australian Department of Health

RANZCR prioritises our relationship with the Department of Health's Diagnostic Imaging and Radiation Oncology sections, developing strong connections with key bureaucrats as well as politicians. We frequently discuss improvements to government policy, including changes to Medicare and the rules that underpin it, as well as other quality and safety issues

Supervision rules for MSK Ultrasound and Nuclear Medicine Services success.

For many years members have highlighted that these rules do not reflect modern clinical practice and should be aligned with other Medicare supervision rules. As a result of our advocacy, the Government has recognised the evolution of radiology practice and changed these rules.

MBS Review for Radiation Oncology

For many years, the College and the wider radiation oncology sector have collaborated with the Australian Federal government to ensure that radiation therapy items in the MBS review reflect contemporary practice. We had anticipated that the announcement of the new RO MBS Schedule would be made in conjunction with the 2023 Federal Budget, however this did not occur.

We are continuing to liaise directly with the Minister for Health, the Hon Mark Butler's office and with Department of Health Radiation Oncology Section to exert pressure on the Government and ensure that the announcement is made, and implementation commences without undue delay.

“The simple statement that RANZCR achieved funding for breast markers in the recent federal budget, belies the hundreds of clinical hours dedicated to preparing the MSAC application and the commitment, skill and tenacity of College staff who shepherded this issue over many years, leveraging high level relationships to ultimately get this over the line.”

Clinical Associate Professor Donna Taylor, Radiologist

Medicare Advocacy - 2023 Australian Federal Budget successes

Funding for breast markers was achieved, with the introduction of a new MBS item for breast marker clip insertion for breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. This was the result of many years work by members and staff and was included in our 2023 pre-budget submission.

Funding for Lung Cancer Screening was confirmed in the 2023 Federal Budget following concerted advocacy, and after being included in RANZCR's 2022 Election Priorities.

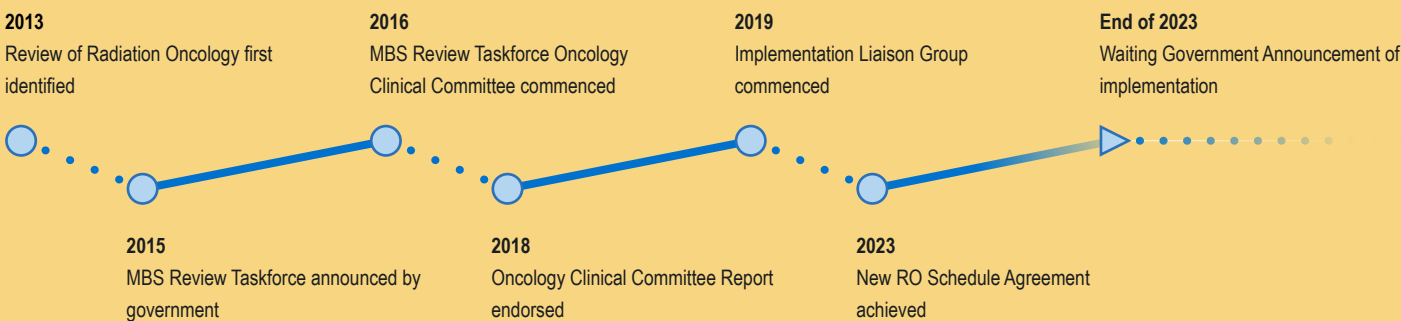
Other Government agency engagement

Effective advocacy often means dealing with the minutiae of policy and practice. RANZCR meets with many government agencies to discuss regulatory requirements, procurement, audits, and national standards.

Being across the detail enables the College to keep ahead of the game, tackle emerging and often time-sensitive issues and consistently demonstrate the value of radiology and radiation oncology. These agencies include:

- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC)
- Australian Medical Council (AMC)
- Medical Board of Australia (MBA)
- Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).
- SA Environmental Protection Agency
- NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation.

Radiation Oncology MBS Review timeline and inputs



over 20 members and 10 staff contributing 1000s of hours



A Unified Voice

Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges (CPMC) - Australia

CPMC is the unifying organisation of, and support structure for individual medical colleges in Australia.

This voluntary and co-operative forum facilitates co-ordinated action by member Medical Colleges, providing objective, intercollegiate advice on health issues to Government and the wider community.

RANZCR President and CEO actively participate in this forum and, where necessary or highly advantageous for our members, add our voice to those of other colleges on relevant issues.

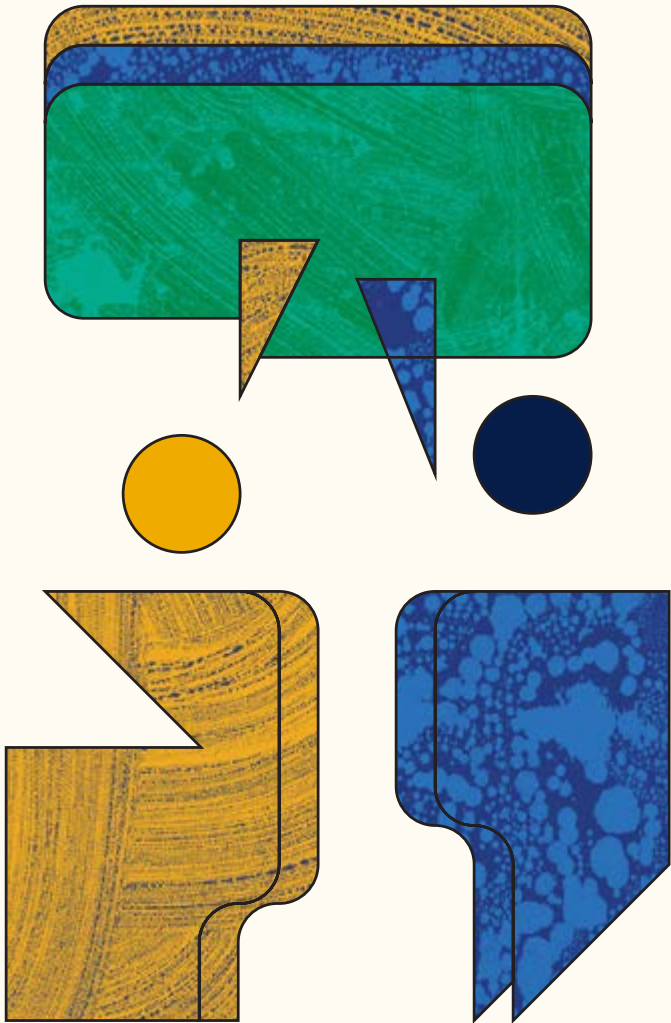
Recent example

RANZCR led discussions that advocated for a more balanced approach to training site accreditation standards to the AMC in response to proposals by State Health departments and Health Ministers for less-strict common accreditation standards to be applied across all colleges for training site accreditation.

Council of Medical Colleges (CMC) - New Zealand

The CMC is the collective voice for 17 Medical Colleges in Aotearoa New Zealand who represent over 9000 medical practitioners working in a range of 34 specialties in the Aotearoa New Zealand health system. This Council operates in a similar way to CPMC in the New Zealand jurisdiction.

The New Zealand Branch Chair, RANZCR's CEO and other staff regularly participate in CMC meetings, taking collective action on issues that impact all individual medical specialties, while prioritising and representing the interests of our members.



Areas of Focus

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Ahead of the game

RANZCR is cementing our role as a thought leader in the AI space, strongly advocating for effective regulation that provides clarity for AI developers and the healthcare system, and importantly, safeguards patient care.

While there is still much work to be done, the College has made great progress in examining the complex issues and implications that many others are still to grapple with.

“RANZCR has been well ahead of other professional organisations in recognising the significance of AI for the future of healthcare and the need for strategic action. The College has provided national and international leadership, undertaking research, valuing consumer perspectives, and producing early statements on ethical principles, practice standards and regulation.”

Stacy Carter, Professor, Empirical Ethics in Health
Director, Australian Centre for Health Engagement
Evidence and Values (ACHEEV)

RANZCR's [Position Paper on the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence in Medicine](#) sets out principles and recommendations to guide the development of a robust regulatory framework for AI technology in medicine.

Published in late 2022, the paper was welcomed by stakeholders and received wide acclaim from international stakeholders who praised RANZCR for 'being ahead of the game'. Following its release, the College met with the TGA to advocate on the importance of appropriate regulation of AI.

Consumer Jury

The Algorithm Will See You Now (TAWSYN) is an NHMRC funded initiative that considers the legal, ethical, and social implications of AI in diagnosis and screening, and culminates with a consumer jury to gauge the public's response to the use of AI in their healthcare.

RANZCR provided support for this initiative, with AI Advisory Committee Chair, Dr John Slavotinek presenting to the Jury on RANZCR's work and position on AI. The College has committed to considering the jury's recommendations and providing a public response later in 2023.

International collaboration

At a recent European Congress of Radiology (ECR) meeting in Vienna, RANZCR led the discussion on fostering an AI collaboration among the many international organisations present.

An agreement has been reached for an international collaboration focusing on AI implementation. It is very exciting to be working with our international counterparts in this way and contributing to a multi-society consensus that informs the practical use of AI in medicine.



Areas of Focus

(Continued)

Indigenous health

Prioritising equitable health outcomes

Improving the equitable health and workforce outcomes for Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is both a strategic priority and moral imperative. The College acknowledges the many years of tireless work and advocacy undertaken by Indigenous Elders, Ancestors, and Indigenous leaders.

This work is being guided by the Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Executive Committee (MATEC), established as a Board subcommittee to provide advice on how best to advance this undertaking and achieve meaningful, effective, and sustainable outcomes.

MATEC developed an [Action Plan for Māori, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health](#) which sets the direction, goals, and strategies to make these aspirations a reality. RANZCR is working closely with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) in delivering this plan.

Success

RANZCR successfully supported AIDA to obtain Federal Government funding to support their new Specialist Training Support Program which aims to grow the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-GP medical specialists.



Inclusive practice

Valuing, respecting, and embracing diversity

The RANZCR Board has established a Diversity Inclusion and Equity Taskforce to advise the College on how we can embody these three core values in every aspect of our work.

This taskforce is in part a response to the pledge by President, Clin A/Prof Sanjay Jeganathan to address the gender gap in the radiology workforce and the under-representation of female radiologists in leadership roles. The College has committed to improving our policies and processes, reconsidering entrenched ways of thinking, and exploring innovative solutions that ultimately foster a more inclusive culture throughout RANZCR.

We will consider ways to address shortcomings in who and how we recruit to our specialties, the environment within the College for members and staff, and representation of a diversity of people across gender, age, and cultural background in the College leadership.



Training Advocacy

Growing the next generation

Securing the future of the profession through world-class training that meets current challenges and future needs is a strategic priority. The aim? To ensure that our members are competent, culturally safe, and adequately prepared for contemporary practice anywhere in Australia and New Zealand.

RANZCR regularly discusses our accreditation requirements, training programs and other workforce considerations with the Australian Medical Council (AMC), Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and Medical Council of New Zealand.

We frequently liaise with state and territory jurisdictions in Australia to discuss state-based issues specifically relating to training, supervision, and training site accreditation.

Digital health

Transforming health care

It will likely come as no surprise that radiology is one of the leading sectors in the digital transformation of healthcare. A massive boost in funding in the last Australian federal budget to support projects and create stability over the next four years, underscores the fact that digital health is a high political priority. It is also an election priority for New Zealand's upcoming election.

RANZCR is working with a variety of stakeholders to help realise the promise of digital health, including the CSIRO Australian e-Health Research Centre, ADIA, IHE Australia, RACGP and the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Interoperability between clinical systems is both the greatest challenge of digital health and its greatest promise and is the subject of many ongoing deliberations.

RANZCR's vision for digital health is set out in the RANZCR/ADIA white paper [Towards Interoperability: Clinical Radiology Forging the Path Ahead](#).

Successes

Specialist Training Pathway (STP)
RANZCR has successfully advocated to increase the number of training positions funded by the Federal Government's STP program.

Rural and Regional Training Pathway (RRTP)
RANZCR attracted funding and enthusiastic support for our newly created RRTP, an innovative approach aims to increase the clinical radiologists and radiation oncologist workforce in regional and rural Australia, by attracting, training, and ultimately retaining clinicians in areas of workforce need.



Media Engagement

Amplifying the message

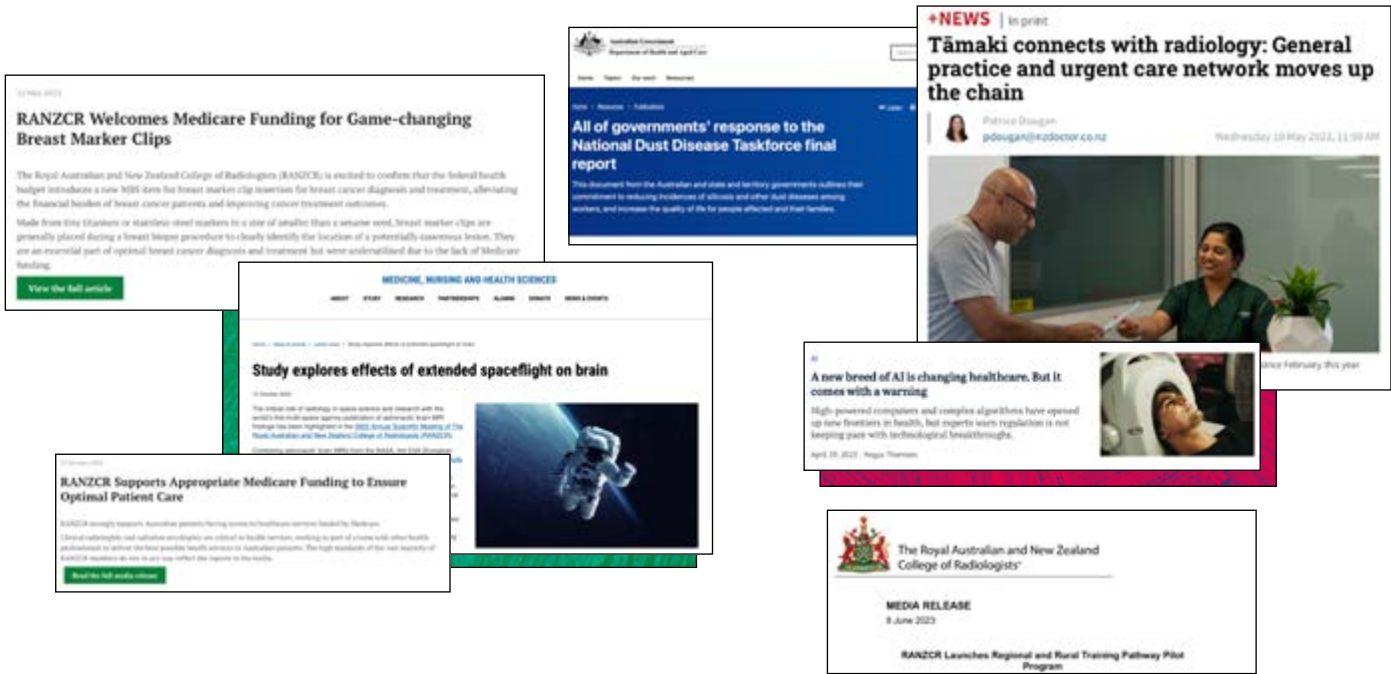
The College works closely with the media to reach, inform and influence a wide audience including the public, wider medical community, other stakeholders, and decision makers.

Our media engagement is both proactive and reactive, with issue-rich and informative content that builds the profile and authority of the College as a trusted source of credible information.

The media plays a significant role in framing public discourse and setting the political agenda and is therefore a valuable asset in our advocacy work, helping to raise awareness of the critical role our professions play in both healthcare systems.

In this way, we can highlight emerging issues, share evidence-based perspectives, and promote and protect our professions. As you will see, we continue to generate positive media coverage across a wide range of topics.

Media Engagement (2023 Q1)	Pro/re-active	Media Reach*
Media Release: RANZCR Release 2020 Australian Clinical Radiology Workforce Census (19 Jan 2023)	Pro-active	-
Media Release: RANZCR Release 2020 New Zealand Clinical Radiology Workforce Census (19 Jan 2023)	Pro-active	-
Prof Meng Law presents astronauts' brain MRI findings at the RANZCR conference	Pro-active	696,900
Media pitching: World Cancer Day 2022 – brachytherapy story (6 Feb 2023)	Pro-active	1,520,000
Media Release: RANZCR Urges the Federal Government to Implement the Recommendations of the National Dust Diseases Taskforce (6 Mar 2023)	Pro-active	-
Media pitching: Uterine Adenomyosis Embolisation and patient story	Pro-active	1,080,000
Q1 Total Media Reach: 3,296,900	Pro-active	3,296,900
Number of media release: 3		
Number of media pitching: 2	Re-active	0



Media Engagement (2023 Q2 - Incomplete) Reporting date: 29 May 2023	Pro/re-active	Media Reach*
Media Release: RANZCR Welcomes Medicare Funding for Game-changing Breast Marker Clips (12 May 2023)	Pro-active	-
Media Release: RANZCR Welcomes Medical Community to Join its CPD Home (23 May 2023)	Pro-active	73,900
A New Breed of AI is Changing Healthcare. But It Comes with a Warning (29 April 2023, Sydney Morning Herald) RANZCR Member Dr Lauren Oakden Rayner talks to The Sydney Morning Herald about AI application in radiology. The story was also syndicated on The Age, Brisbane Times, The WA Today.	Re-active	12,070,000
Tāmaki connects with radiology: General practice and urgent care network moves up the chain (10 May 2023, New Zealand Doctor)	Re-active	43,300
Q2 Media Reach (as of 29 May): 12,187,200	Re-active	12,113,300
Number of media release: 2		
Number of media pitching: 0	Pro-active	73,900

Consultations we respond to

Promoting the value of our professions, issue by issue

The College takes advantage of many opportunities to educate and promote the value of clinical radiology and radiation oncology to government and other stakeholders. We are regularly invited to contribute our perspectives, knowledge, and data to a wide variety of consultations conducted by governments and other organisations.

While this is inevitably time consuming, these opportunities place radiology and radiation oncology on the agenda, build relationships and trust and help to ensure that we have a seat at the table.

Most importantly, they provide invaluable early notice of proposed changes to policies, processes or regulations that will impact our members and our patients in both countries and enable us to present and discuss our viewpoint in a timely manner.

New Zealand Ministry of Health

NZ Women's Health Strategy, Promoted RO and CR workforce issues and women's health.

Medical Council of New Zealand

Submission on Medical Certification. RANZCR made a submission giving a perspective on radiologists providing a medical certification for a patient.

Provided feedback to MCNZ on their updated draft Statement on Telehealth and reiterated that radiologists who treat NZ patients must be registered in NZ.

Australian Department of Health

Provided feedback on the proposed review of Guidance on Laws Relating to Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging – Prohibited Practices. RANZCR did not have any additional feedback to provide with regards to the current legislation, however used the opportunity to advocate for patient choice and transparency in the digital health space.

Provided feedback on the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Policy and Methods Review, relating to the process undertaken by MSAC in assessing new items for potential inclusion in the MBS. RANZCR used the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the MSAC process itself.

Responded to a request for advice on rare or uncommon cancers that may have been missed during the MSAC assessment for the recent listing on the MBS for PET for initial staging of rare or uncommon cancers. RANZCR provided a number of additional cancers that are not currently listed or captured in the current MBS item.

Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)

Medicare Application 1744 - 177 Lutetium (nca) Octreotate treatment for advanced neuroendocrine and other high somatostatin receptor expressing tumours (NETs). RANZCR supported the clinical aspects of the application and the use of 177 Lutetium for the treatment of NETs, however expressed concerns about potential issues of patient access and the workforce requirements that need to be in place for the item to be accessible.

A resubmission of Medicare Application 1525.1- Low dose rate (LDR) brachytherapy for intermediate and high-risk prostate cancer. RANZCR supported the application and would welcome the item's inclusion on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) if approved by MSAC.

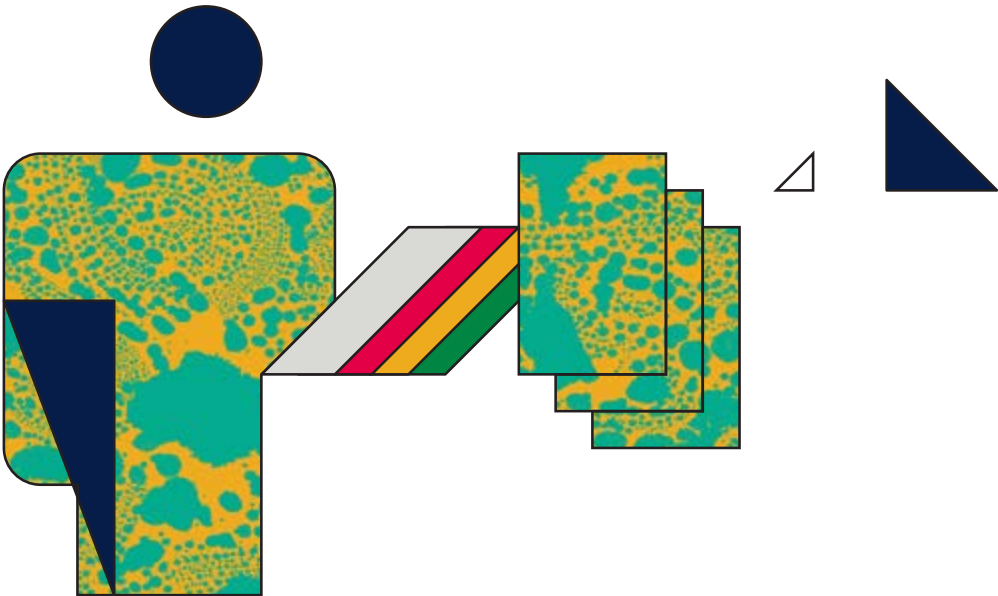
Provided additional clinical feedback on MSAC application 1713 – Cardiac MRI in the diagnosis of myocarditis. RANZCR reiterated support for the application and provided additional clinical details as requested by MSAC.

Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)

Submitted a response to RACP's Regional, Rural, and Remote Physician Strategy and Recommendations. RANZCR was supportive of RACP's strategy and recommendations and provided additional feedback to strengthen the strategy. RANZCR is happy to have the opportunity to work with the RACP given the current workforce challenges in regional, rural, and remote areas impacting radiology and radiation oncology.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACQSHC)

Provided feedback on ANZCA's review of the PG09 Guideline on procedural sedation. Advocating on behalf of interventional radiology to ensure implementation of these guidelines is effective and does not impair patient access.





The Royal Australian and New Zealand
College of Radiologists®

For more information on RANZCR's policy and advocacy work please contact:

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