



The Northern Australia Surgeons' Conference was held at Cairns Base Hospital on 18-20 August. The overarching theme of the meeting was cancer care in regional Australia. There were 35 registrants for the whole program, although numbers at individual sessions were boosted by walk-ins of nursing staff and medical students.

The weekend commenced with two interactive workshops on Friday afternoon. The first of these, with the unprepossessing title of "Suturing Tips" was delivered by local Plastic Surgeon, Nita Ling. This proved to be a goldmine of useful information for both trainees and well-seasoned consultants. The second workshop on clinical photography by Constable Greg Dwyer was a tantalising introduction to an increasingly useful skill.

The remainder of the weekend consisted of a series of invited lecturers and free papers. Participants were able to receive updates from experts in the field, such as Pretoria Bilinski (Medical Oncology), Owen Ung (Breast Surgery), Yik-hong Ho (Colorectal Surgery) and Gresham Clapham (Endoscopy). They were also able to deliver the fruits of their own clinical research and audit for discussion in a wider forum.

It was indeed humbling to realise that colleagues had driven or flown great distances at considerable risk and/or expense to participate in this event. As well as the factual content of the conference, there were valuable opportunities to socialise, network, and seek therapeutic succor in bemoaning common hardships. (Dancing to an authentic blues band at the conference dinner was also quite therapeutic!)

In sum, meetings such as this aim to provide evidence of the viability and inclusivity of regionally based CPD programs. We look forward to the NASC becoming an annual event – and not necessarily for just those of us fortunate to live north of the Tropic.

Richard Turner