



NORTHERN QUEENSLAND
REGIONAL TRAINING
HUBS



Tropical
Australian
Academic
Health
Centre

MED NORRTH Conference

(Northern Outcomes in Regional Research, Translation, and Health)

16 August 2025



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Australian
College of
Rural & Remote
Medicine

WORLD LEADERS IN RURAL PRACTICE

Conference Program

7:45am	Registration Opens
Session 1 8:30am	<p>Welcome & Introduction</p> <p><i>Conference Opening Address by Professor Sarah Larkins, Dean College of Medicine and Dentistry</i></p> <p><i>Keynote address by Professor Clare Heal, Promotional Chair, Discipline of General Practice</i></p> <p><i>Gold Sponsor presentation – Miga</i></p> <p><i>Supporter Sponsor presentation – Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)</i></p>
Session 2 9:30am	<p>Oral Presentations</p> <p><i>Beyond the Pain: The Psychosocial Impacts of Adenomyosis in Australia.</i> Presenter: Sarah McDonnell, MBBS student</p> <p><i>Effect of aerobic cycling on resistance-induced changes in heart rate variability.</i> Presenter: Tali Wunsh, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Diagnostic Validation of Seegene GI Helminth Allplex Assay in a High Endemicity Population.</i> Presenter: Anna Duan, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Suprathel® Epidermal Substitute in the Management of Paediatric Burn Wounds: A Scoping Review.</i> Presenter: Dr Aneesha Ghosh, Prevocational Medical Doctor</p> <p><i>Evaluating Diabetes Care Processes, Comorbidity Burden, and CGM Utilisation in Regional Australia: Results from Central Queensland Hospital.</i> Presenter: Aatif Syed, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>A systematic review and meta-analysis assessing the ability of histone deacetylase 6 inhibitors to reduce the pathological impacts of acute ischaemic stroke in rodent models.</i> Co-presenters: Oliver Ma and Timothy Noack, MBBS Students</p>

10:30am	Morning Tea
Session 3 10:50am	<p>Oral Presentations</p> <p><i>Outcome of an elective Large-Volume Paracentesis Clinic on Hospital Readmission Rates for Patients with Decompensated Cirrhosis and Ascites.</i> Presenter: Dr Mirko Farruggia, Prevocational Medical Doctor</p> <p><i>Accuracy of the HEAR score in predicting 30-day Major Adverse Cardiovascular Events in Emergency Department patients with suspected Acute Coronary Syndrome: Systematic review and Meta-analysis.</i> Presenter: Noemie Da Costa, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Aboriginal Bush Medicine as a Source of Anti-Inflammatory Agents: Insights from a Human Immune Cell Model.</i> Presenter: Fitsum Abay Weldenugus, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Sodium glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitor-associated euglycaemic diabetic ketoacidosis in the emergency peri-operative period: A systematic review</i> Presenter: Dennis Perez Castillo, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Reduction in IV Fluid Use Following Implementation of a Shortage-Response Protocol in Australian Capital Territory Eds.</i> Presenter: Marita Bolic, MBBS Student</p> <p><i>Telehealth-assisted oncology care: identifying markers of quality and safety.</i> Presenter: Ellie Barbagallo, MBBS Student</p>
Session 4 11:40am	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Panel Topic: “Research Journeys in Motion: Exploring Research from the Ground Up”</p> <p>Panel Chair: Associate Professor Joseph Moxon; Principal Research Fellow</p> <p>Panellists: Associate Professor Eamon Raith: <i>ICU Consultant, Mackay Base Hospital and Research Lead, Mackay Clinical School</i> Dr Vana Sabesan: <i>Consultant Paediatrician, Townsville University Hospital</i> Dr Chelsea Smith: <i>JCU PhD Candidate and GP Registrar</i> Reece Martis: <i>JCU MBBS (Honours) Student; 2025 JCUMSA President and recipient of the 2024 NQRTH Rural Research Honours Bursary.</i></p>

12:25pm

Lunch & Poster Presentations

Large central hepatic regenerative nodules in adults with Alagille syndrome: a limited case series – Dr Christopher James Shephard; Medical Registrar

Exercise-Induced Rhabdomyolysis Masquerading as Liver Injury – Dr Takuma Konno; Prevocational Medical Doctor

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Approach to Immune Thrombocytopenia: A Case Report – Dr Takuma Konno; Prevocational Medical Doctor

A Rare Case of Uvular Necrosis Following Routine Diagnostic Oesophagogastrroduodenoscopy – Dr Takuma Konno; Prevocational Medical Doctor

The effectiveness of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for pain relief during outpatient intrauterine device (IUD) insertion: a systematic review – Marita Bolic; MBBS Student

From Barnyards to B-Cells: A review of the evidence linking Coxiella burnetii to haematological malignancy risk – Anna Duan; MBBS Student

The Impact of a Territory-Wide Protocol on First-Dose Antibiotic Route in the Canberra Hospital ED – Marita Bolic; MBBS Student

Interventions to Reduce Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Indigenous Peoples with Chronic Kidney Disease: A Scoping Review – Reece Martis; MBBS Student

Session 5
1:20pm

Oral Presentations

Biomarkers associated with frailty in cardiovascular surgery: a systematic review and meta-analysis.

Presenter: Dr Ellen Quinn, Prevocational Medical Doctor

PICC Line Tip Position and Reinsertion Rates in an ICU Setting: A 3-Year Retrospective Audit in Queensland.

Presenter: Jasdeep Sethi, MBBS Student

Atypical Pathogenic Effects of a Novel C. difficile Toxin.

Presenter: Kimberley Bourke, MBBS Student

Can Non-Neurosurgeons Operate on Traumatic Brain Injuries in Non-Metropolitan Areas? A Scoping Review.

Presenter: Dr Lauren Bosley, Prevocational Medical Doctor

Opening a can of worms: A qualitative study on the feasibility and acceptability of One Health approaches to Soil-Transmitted Helminthiases (STHs) in rural Northern Australia.

Presenter: Anna Duan, MBBS Student

"But aren't all medical students from rich families?" The financial impact of placement on medical students at an Australian regional medical school."

Presenter: Abbey Deguara, MBBS Student

Session 6
2:25pm

Workshop: *Types of research questions and how best to answer them*

Workshop Facilitator: *Associate Professor Rae Thomas, Research Education Lead, Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC).*

Session 7
3:20pm

Oral Presentations

The Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Gen AI for Learning and Assessment Amongst Australian Medical Students: A Single Tertiary Institution Study in Northern Queensland

Presenter: Eunah Joo, MBBS Student

Risk perception of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) with natalizumab among patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) and neurologists: a systematic review.

Presenter: Lachlan Williams, MBBS Student

Resilience in Rural: A Longitudinal Evaluation of Medical Student Adaptability During Remote Clinical Rotations.

Presenter: Jordan Bayne, MBBS Student

Value-based use of blood cultures in Townsville University Hospital Emergency Department.

Presenter: Amy Weber, MBBS Student

3:55pm

Conference Wrap Up and Awards

Presenter Biographies



Conference Opening Address

Professor Sarah Larkins

Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry

Dr Sarah Larkins is an experienced research leader, general practitioner and Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry, James Cook University, comprising disciplines of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Biomedicine and Molecular Cell Biology. As a clinician researcher, Sarah has particular skills and experience in health systems and workforce research and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and is a recognised expert in social accountability in health professional education. Sarah is also Co-Director of the Anton Breinl Research Centre for Health Systems Strengthening. Sarah has over 180 published peer-reviewed journal articles and several book chapters, with an h-index of 37, more than 4500 citations and well over \$98m in grant funding. She currently supervises 10 HDR students with 20 PhD completions. Sarah currently serves as the Convenor, Clinical Leadership Group for the NHMRC-recognised Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre and a member of the National Health and Medical Research Council Research Committee for this triennium.



Keynote Address

Professor Clare Heal

Promotional Chair, Discipline of General Practice

Dr Clare Heal is Professor (Promotional Chair) and Academic Lead of the Department of General Practice at James Cook University. She has worked for JCU since 2002, and has been employed at every academic grade from A (research officer) to E (full professor). She has supervised 35 medical student honours research projects to completion, and has published more than 150 peer reviewed academic publications. From 2022–2023 she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and completed a Masters in Epidemiology at Harvard University.

Panel Discussion



Panel Chair

Associate Professor Joseph Moxon

Principal Research Fellow

Associate Professor Joseph (Joe) Moxon is a Principal Research Fellow at James Cook University and former Associate Dean Research for the College of Medicine and Dentistry (2019–2025). Since completing his PhD at the University of Wales Aberystwyth in 2008, he has led pioneering research in vascular biology, with a focus on Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), stroke, and abdominal aortic aneurysm. His work spans biomarker discovery, clinical trials, and health equity, particularly in underserved populations, and is supported by funding from national and philanthropic bodies. A/Prof Moxon has supervised numerous PhD, MSc, and Honours students, and was recognised with JCU's Advisory Panel Member of the Year Award in 2022. He contributes actively to national and international scientific committees, editorial boards, and peer review panels, and is committed to mentoring the next generation of clinician-researchers.



Panelist

Associate Professor Eamon Raith

ICU Consultant, Mackay Base Hospital and Research Lead, Mackay Clinical School

Associate Professor Eamon Raith is an intensive care medicine specialist and neurointensivist. He conducts translational critical care research in neurocritical care medicine (with a focus on critical care management of traumatic brain injury and aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage), biophotonics and health security.

A/Prof Raith has a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Adelaide, a Master of Advanced Critical Care Practice from Monash University, a Master of Clinical Ultrasound from the University of Melbourne and a PhD in Medicine from the University of Adelaide. He is the Research Lead for Mackay Clinical School at James Cook University, and appointed as a Clinical Senior Lecturer at The University of Adelaide, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre (Monash University) and an Honorary Senior Fellow at the Critical Care Research Group & Institute for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Queensland. He is also appointed as a Clinical Senior Lecturer at University College London, and has previously held honorary appointments at the University of Oxford.

Panel Discussion



Panelist

Dr Vana Sabesan

Consultant Paediatrician, Townsville University Hospital

Dr Sabesan has been a General Paediatrician at Townsville Hospital since 2007, with special interests in regional paediatric oncology and nephrology. She currently serves as the Network Medical Director for the Queensland Basic Paediatric Training Network, where she oversees trainee selection into the Basic Paediatric Training Program (RACP) and leads initiatives to ensure equitable distribution of trainees across Queensland.

As Director of Paediatric Education at Townsville University Hospital, Dr Sabesan is responsible for managing the hospital's paediatric education program and providing support to both trainees and supervisors. She also contributes to several committees of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and supervises multiple research projects undertaken by advanced trainees and medical students.

Dr Sabesan is committed to developing fair and transparent selection processes, and to building supportive programs that enhance the experience and wellbeing of both trainees and educators.



Panelist

Dr Chelsea Smith

JCU PhD Candidate and GP Registrar

Dr Chelsea Smith is an early career researcher who is currently enrolled as a PhD candidate at James Cook University (JCU) and working as a registrar with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Graduating with First Class Honours and awarded the University Medal from JCU, Dr Smith has a special interest in bringing research to the primary healthcare setting where the opportunity for prevention is greatest at the patient's first point of contact with the healthcare system.



Panelist

Reece Martis

JCU MBBS (Honours) Student; 2025 JCUMSA
President and recipient of the 2024 NQRTH
Rural Research Honours Bursary

Reece Martis is a final year medical student at JCU with a passion for rural medicine and cardiology. As a recipient of the North Queensland Rural Training Hub (NQRTH) Rural Research Bursary as well as the Lynn Kratcha rural scholarship and the Amuthan Medical Research Grant, Reece is currently undertaking his honors project evaluating the cardiovascular impacts of the remote Indigenous Cape York Kidney Care team up in Weipa. As president of the JCU Medical Students' Society (JCUMSA) and former academic rep and deputy journal club officer, Reece is passionate about spreading his joy for research.

Workshop Facilitator



Associate Professor Rae Thomas

Research Education Lead, Tropical Australian
Academic Health Centre (TAAHC)

Dr Rae Thomas is an Associate Professor in Evidence-Based Practice and commenced as the Research Education Lead for the Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre in April 2022. She has taught hundreds of clinicians and researchers in evidence-based practice, research translation skills, conducted research mentoring, co-developed clinician-led research projects, conducted project consultation, and provided HDR and post-doctoral supervision.

Her research has focused on reducing the gap between research evidence and clinical practice. Rae's passion is to improve evidence-based decision making in clinical practice and to use community engagement strategies to improve health systems and policy. Her program of research has included developing, implementing, and evaluating randomised controlled trials, exploring processes in health decision making, and translating evidence to practice and policy.



Tropical
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Open the door to a world of possibilities in northern Queensland.

Northern Queensland Regional Training Hubs (NQRTH) was formed by JCU as part of an initiative of the Australian Government's Integrated Rural Training Pipeline (IRTP) and funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Explore training pathways, career planning resources, and research and education opportunities — and discover what makes northern Queensland an ideal place to train and live.

www.nqrth.edu.au



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