

CASE STUDY

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists Annual Scientific Meeting 2025 at Cairns Convention Centre

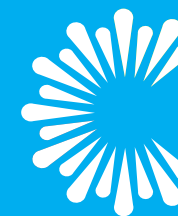
Welcome and
president's report

ANZCA President, Professor Dave Story



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CAIRNS
CONVENTION
CENTRE

CASE STUDY



1,900
IN-PERSON DELEGATES



263
SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS



115+
WORKSHOPS ACROSS FIVE DAYS

ANZCA ASM 2025 | Cairns Convention Centre, Future Proofing Medicine in the Tropics

FUTURE PROOFING MEDICINE IN THE TROPICS

In May 2025, Cairns Convention Centre proudly hosted the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), marking the second time this prestigious medical conference has been held in Cairns - the last being over 16 years ago. With more than **1,900** in-person delegates, **263** speakers and facilitators, and more than **115** workshops across **five** days, the meeting was a remarkable showcase of innovation, sustainability, and community collaboration.

The meeting theme, *Future Proof*, set the tone for a powerful program exploring how anaesthesia, pain, and perioperative medicine can adapt to meet tomorrow's challenges. From the outset, the Centre worked closely with the ANZCA team, led by local Chair of the Regional Organising Committee, Dr Andrew Potter, to bring this vision to life in a setting that embodied sustainability and regional pride.

“We could not have been more pleased with our Cairns Convention Centre experience. Having a purpose built and sophisticated convention centre in Cairns with such professional and engaging staff made for an easy decision and, as proven, a very successful one.”

Professor David Story, President , ANZCA



SUSTAINING THE PROFESSION, THE PEOPLE, AND THE PLANET

The *Future Proof* theme reflected the ANZCA committee's ambition to engage delegates in crucial conversations about environmental, workforce, and personal sustainability. According to Dr Potter, "These three pillars were equally important. Bringing them together under the theme of Future Proof helped frame our shared goal of protecting the future of our profession, and our planet."

This commitment extended beyond the program. At every level, the Centre and ANZCA collaborated to ensure a reduced environmental footprint, from the use of reusable cutlery and locally sourced produce to energy efficient venue operations and thoughtful delegate experiences that connected attendees with the natural beauty of Far North Queensland.

"The efforts made by Cairns Convention Centre to promote sustainability during the meeting were noted and appreciated by delegates," said Dr Potter. "It reinforced the key messages we wanted to deliver."

“It is important as an industry that both clients and venues look for ways to be leaders in delivering sustainable events. It was a privilege to work with ANZCA on a program where sustainability wasn't just a theme, but a lived experience across catering, logistics, and delegate engagement.”

Janet Hamilton, General Manager, Cairns Convention Centre



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FLEXIBILITY, FLOW, AND FLAWLESS EXECUTION

The scale of the 2025 ASM was immense. As Jan Sharrock, ANZCA's Executive Director of Fellowship Affairs, reflected, "We had 1,946 in-person delegates and 263 contributors delivering over 55 sessions and 115 workshops. The versatility of the Centre's spaces helped us deliver this seamlessly and with an enhanced delegate experience."

One major achievement was accommodating over 110 workshops in a single day, a logistical feat made possible through the Centre's dynamic room configurations and proactive team," said Sharrock.

That responsiveness extended beyond technical logistics. "From the very beginning, the planning process was engaging and thoughtful," Sharrock added. "It was the small touches too, like a couch and gifts in the event room, or care shown in guiding an elderly delegate, that made all the difference."

"Our approach is built on partnership," said Hamilton. "We see ourselves as an extension of the organising team, and that mindset is what allows us to respond quickly and effectively to changing needs on the ground."

“ The Cairns Convention Centre team was flexible with our requests, understood the delivery needs, and adapted as required. It's not something we see, or say, all the time.”

Jan Sharrock, Executive Director of Fellowship Affairs, ANZCA



A SHOWCASE FOR REGIONAL EXCELLENCE

For Dr Potter, a Cairns-based anaesthetist, convening the ASM in his hometown was both a professional and personal milestone. Indeed, Cairns not only hosted the meeting, but it also helped shape it. “The involvement of Cairns Hospital’s leadership and the local anaesthetic department was instrumental,” said Sharrock. “Their input infused the scientific program with a grounded and authentic perspective on the realities of regional healthcare.”

The benefits of hosting in Cairns were echoed by ANZCA President, Professor David Story: “As a college, our commitment is to ensure all fellows and trainees have access to high quality education, research, and science. This should not be determined only by access to large metropolitan cities. We also want to provide opportunities for our regional members to convene an ASM and feel the pride and satisfaction of showcasing their skills, quality of care, and region to delegates nationally and internationally.”

“When I was invited to chair the Regional Organising Committee, I was honoured, but also nervous. These meetings are usually held in large capital cities. But what we proved is that regional communities are more than capable of delivering events of this scale.”

Dr Andrew Potter, anaesthetist, Cairns



MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND LASTING IMPACT

Beyond the walls of the Centre, delegates had the opportunity to participate in optional excursions that deepened their connection to the region and its expertise. A standout experience was the guided tour of the Cairns Aquarium led by marine biologist Jennie Gilbert, where attendees explored turtle conservation and anaesthesia in marine life.

Other activities, such as charitable donations to local organisations and the Emerging Leaders Conference held at the coastal Thala Beach, fostered moments of reflection and inspiration while reinforcing ANZCA's commitment to integrating community and culture into the delegate experience.

"These optional activities helped reinforce our theme and provided depth to the delegate experience," said Sharrock. "They also created an appreciation for the unique contributions of regional professionals."

The 2025 ASM was more than just a scientific meeting—it was a transformative experience for many delegates. The Centre received consistent praise not only for its state-of-the-art facilities but also for its welcoming atmosphere and dedicated team.

"The Centre was clean, bright, and easy to navigate," said Dr Potter. "Hope from the team deserves special mention for her energy and enthusiasm. Security staff were friendly and helpful. I've rarely been to a large event where the team felt this accessible and kind."

One particularly moving moment came during the Welcome to Country by Gavin Singleton. "His message was passionate and beautifully aligned with the Future Proof theme," recalled Dr Potter. "He highlighted the importance of country, culture, and sustainability in ways that will stay with our delegates for years."



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SUSTAINABILITY



21,000+
DISPOSABLE CUPS SAVED
FROM LANDFILL



173.99
TONNES OF CARBON
EMISSIONS COLLECTIVELY
OFFSET BY DELEGATES



55%
LESS WASTE PER DAY THAN
THE AVERAGE EVENT. THE
CONFERENCE GENERATED JUST
0.84 KILOGRAMS OF WASTE PER
ATTENDEE PER DAY.

SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

The 2025 ANZCA ASM set a new standard for environmental responsibility in conferencing in Australia. In collaboration with the Centre, the meeting implemented a comprehensive sustainability strategy that produced measurable impact.

Over 21,500 disposable cups were saved from landfill by adopting a no-consumables policy. Instead, all catering used glassware, crockery, and even edible containers, significantly reducing single-use waste.

Carbon offsetting was a major focus. Delegates collectively offset 173.99 tonnes of carbon emissions, and ANZCA contributed up to \$2,500 to cover any gap, resulting in a total offset of 287.62 tonnes and a financial contribution of \$6,324 to Greenfleet. An additional \$3,900 was donated to charity partners supporting climate and sustainability initiatives.

According to data collected in collaboration with MeetGreen, the conference generated just 0.84 kilograms of waste per attendee per day—55% less than the average event. Waste audits were conducted throughout the build, event delivery, and de-rig phases to monitor and minimise impact in real time.

Additionally, all prepared but unserved food was donated to local organisation YouthLink, ensuring surplus was redirected to community benefit instead of landfill.

A MESSAGE TO FUTURE CONFERENCE PLANNERS

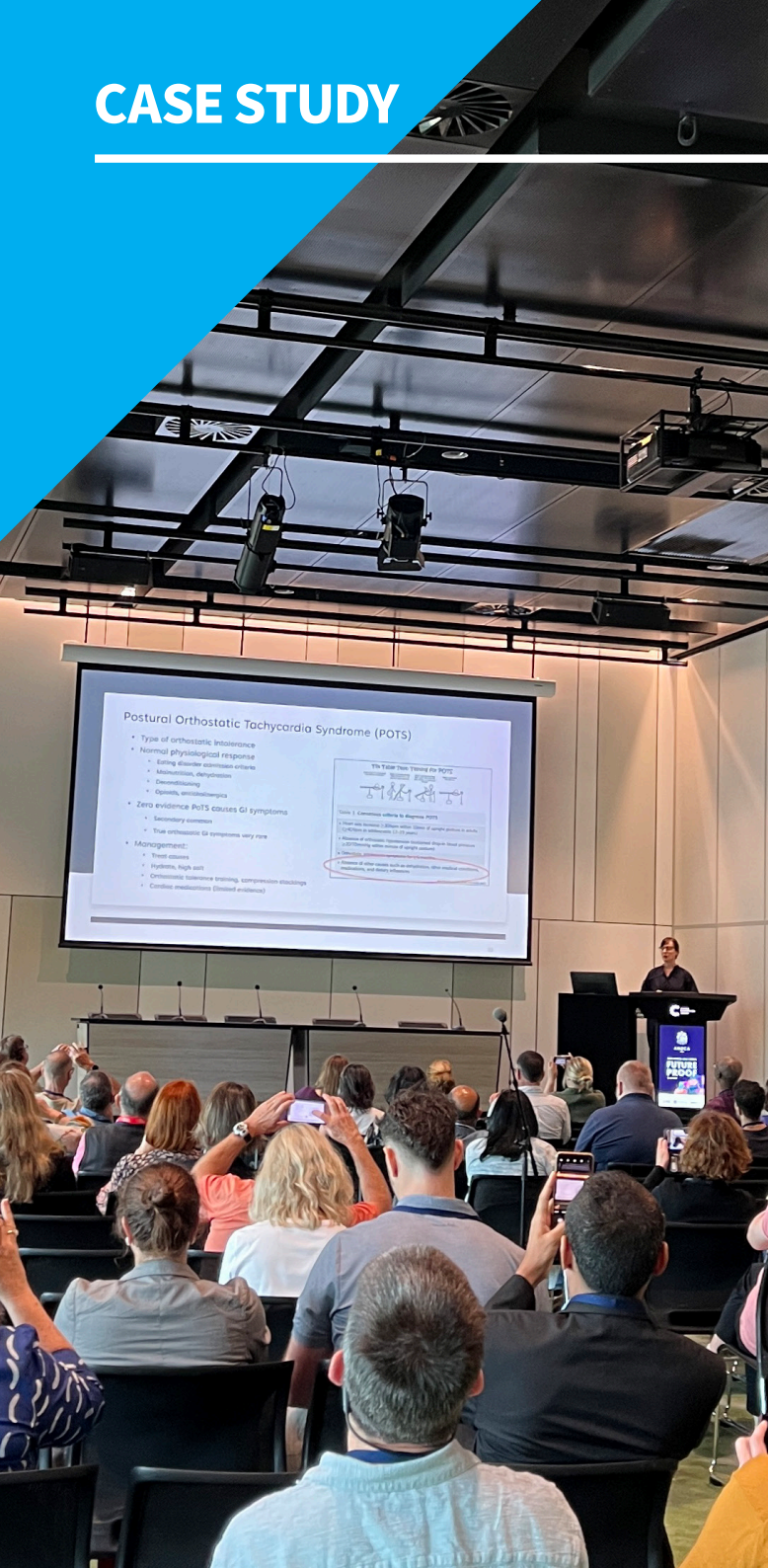
For other associations considering a regional destination, the ANZCA team's message is clear, Cairns delivers.

"To other professional organisations thinking of coming to Cairns, I would recommend it without reservation," said Dr Potter. "The ANZCA events team, WALDRONSMITH Management, Wallfly, and the Cairns Convention Centre team worked together to deliver a slick, professional, and impactful meeting that will be remembered long into the future."

"We are incredibly proud of the role we played in showcasing what a regional destination like Cairns can achieve," said Hamilton. "The success of this event is a testament not only to our facility, but to the collaborative spirit that defines our region."

“Feedback from delegates has been extremely positive, including some of our international speakers saying it was quite possibly the best meeting they had been to in a very long time, maybe ever.”

Professor David Story, President, ANZCA



DESTINATION SUPPORT

The Australia and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting was supported by the Queensland Government Partner Funding and Business Event Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Bid Fund.

Assistant Minister for Tourism, Early Learning, Creative Industries and Far North Queensland, Bree James emphasised the value of bringing this prestigious ASM to Cairns. "Welcoming the ANZCA ASM to Cairns was a proud moment for our region and a powerful endorsement of the depth of expertise we have in Far North Queensland. Hosting an event of this scale outside a capital city not only showcases our world-class facilities and local talent but also reinforces the value of regional voices in shaping the future of healthcare. It's a testament to what's possible when innovation, collaboration, and community come together."

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, General Manager, Tara Bennett said "ANZCA demonstrated how well Cairns can host more than 1,900 delegates while ensuring they enjoyed a warm tropical welcome and the intimacy that comes from a regional city. With Cairns Airport just 10 minutes from the Cairns Convention Centre and five-star hotels within walking distance, the ease of moving around provides a distinct advantage. Delegates can quickly connect in the compact waterfront city environment with the added advantage of instant access to green space for wellness and recreational activities."



CONCLUSION

The 2025 ANZCA ASM at Cairns Convention Centre proved that excellence in medical conferencing is not confined to capital cities. Through a shared commitment to sustainability, inclusion, and regional empowerment, the event left a legacy for ANZCA, the Cairns community, and all the delegates who participated.

It also raised the bar for environmentally conscious conferencing, showing that practical, measurable sustainability can be seamlessly integrated into events of any scale.

For the team at Cairns Convention Centre, hosting the 2025 ANZCA ASM was a proud and defining moment, an opportunity to demonstrate the Centre's capability, commitment, and passion. Welcoming nearly 2,000 in-person delegates to a regional city for a major medical conference was more than a logistical success; it was a celebration of what makes Cairns truly special, a testament where purpose and place come together to create meaningful and memorable experiences.

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