



UROLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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Urological Society establishes framework to address gender equity issues

The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand has established an expert advisory committee to address gender equity issues among its membership and to foster the promotion of women in urology.

The SWANZU Committee will represent the Surgical Women in Australia and New Zealand Urology Special Interest Community and will be an important conduit to the USANZ (Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand) Board of Directors.

The USANZ Board acknowledges that female urologists are valued members of USANZ but are still under-represented in our specialty. USANZ is committed to addressing the imbalance and is hopeful the establishment of this committee will help remove some of the barriers to women fully participating in urology, and complement practices that have already been put in place by USANZ in recent years such as part-time and flexible training programs.

Dr Anita Clarke will chair the new SWANZU Advisory Committee and will act as Expert Advisor to the Board of Directors on matters relating to women in Urology.

The role of the committee will be to advocate for measurable sustainable and positive change in the status of women within USANZ and identify any negative gender discriminatory aspect or barriers to women's participation in USANZ business. The committee will also identify women to hold representative roles on stakeholder committees or programs.

"Urology is a dynamic and rewarding specialty and we want to support the careers of our female colleagues and also to help facilitate and encourage women to undertake urology as a specialty. I believe mentorship of women by those who have come before is an important part of supporting younger urologists and trainees navigate the demands of a surgical speciality with all other aspects of being a woman," said Dr Clarke.

"We want women to become involved in all aspects of urology including andrology, oncology, stones and female urology. Currently women make up about 14% of the USANZ membership and 28% of trainees. Our goal is to promote meaningful change to make this figure truly representative of the wider community", said Dr Clarke.

At a time when USANZ is elevating the focus on women, the Board is delighted with the election of Professor Helen O'Connell as incoming Vice-President of USANZ. Professor O'Connell is a highly regarded clinical and academic urologist and was the first female to be trained in Australia and New Zealand. She will serve as Vice-President before assuming the role of President in 2023.

Professor O'Connell said she was honoured to be elected by her peers. "That USANZ has voted for a female President-to-be indicates a significant change in the place of women, bearing in mind it was also a big shift for a female to become a trainee Urologist back in 1991. For women aspiring to become a Urologist I believe this demonstrates our professional culture supports and trusts female leadership," said Professor O'Connell.

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The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand is the peak professional body for urological surgeons in Australia and New Zealand. Urologists are surgeons who treat men, women and children with problems involving the kidney, bladder, prostate and male reproductive organs. These conditions include cancer, stones, infection, incontinence, sexual dysfunction and pelvic floor problems.