

USANZ Trainee Week 2024 Report

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to report on my attendance at the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) Trainee Week in Brisbane, November 2024. Firstly, I would like to thank The Urology Foundation, BSoT and BAUS for their support and funding me to attend. My heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to Jenny Hislop and Deborah Klein, the USANZ course organisers, for their meticulous planning, impeccable attention to detail and genuine care for us as international delegates. I also thank Dr Adrian Clubb, course convenor, for organising such a brilliant programme and for welcoming us so warmly. It was a joy to share this experience with my estimable friend and colleague, Luke Chan, from Leeds.

The week began with observing the USANZ trainees undergoing viva examinations. The stations were intense with quick fire questions covering a vast array of topics and we were immediately impressed with the clinical acumen and knowledge base of the trainees. Their ability to think and communicate clearly under pressure was evident and inspiring.

We then went on to have a series of interactive lectures throughout the week on a range of Urological topics presented by residents as well as experts in the field. The case-based discussions were particularly eye-opening as it gave us a chance to compare and contrast the differences in practice between Australia and the UK. The teaching also gave us insight and training in clinical decision-making and the evidence underlying it, both relevant to the FRCS and daily clinical practice.

Many of the USANZ trainees were interested in practice in the UK, and were planning fellowships at UK institutions. Likewise, it was a valuable experience for me to learn about the various fellowship opportunities in Australia, first hand from trainees who had worked at the institutions. Several of the speakers were also from centres that offered fellowships and they were keen to advertise their programmes.

One of the amazing things about this event was being part of the international delegation and therefore I was able to meet trainees from Canada, Portugal, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. It was really interesting to hear about how they practice in their regions.

As internationals, we explored Brisbane together. Brisbane is a wonderful place, and one of Australia's most biodiverse cities. Roof-top gardens are seen far and wide and the juxtaposition of flora and fauna amongst city skyscrapers was breath-taking; they even have an inner-city man-made beach, enjoyed by families and city-workers alike! The captivating



City Botanic Gardens were a joy to experience as was the 'CityCat' ferry trip across the beautiful Brisbane River.

USANZ were so generous in not only hosting us in a lovely hotel but also providing sponsored dinners nearly every night. These were great events and a really nice way to unwind after a full day of intensive training. In the midst of all the excellent teaching events, USANZ very kindly provided a trip to Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary for the internationals. (What is a visit to Australia without seeing a koala bear?!) It was great fun feeding kangaroos, koalas and exotic birds which were all part of the unforgettable experience.



On the penultimate day of the week was the annual 'Masters of the Uroverse' quiz, where teams representing each region of Australia compete for the coveted prize. Each international delegate was invited to join a team as their 'wildcard'. The team costumes were commendable and a lot of fun and once again we, as internationals, were impressed with the trainees' knowledge of niche Urology trivia.

The week was rounded off with a final dinner and speeches. The international delegates were individually presented with gift bags and certificates, yet another personal touch so thoughtfully planned. It was sad to say goodbye to people who I had become so close with in such a short space of time; it was a truly memorable experience. I left feeling equipped with a knowledge and skill base to tackle the FRCS. I have made friendships for life and identified fellowship opportunities. This was my first time visiting Australia and I certainly hope it will not be my last.

