



ANZCA

FPM

CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

18 February 2026

Dr Rachel David
Chief Executive Officer
Private Healthcare Australia (PHA)
Via email: Rachel.David@pha.org.au

Dear Rachel,

ANZCA and PHA meeting

As you may be aware, in December 2025 I commenced as chief executive officer of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), which includes the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM).

ANZCA is responsible for the postgraduate training programs of anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians. Over the past months, I have been familiarising myself on the key issues relating to ANZCA's robust postgraduate training programs and fostering the highest standards of clinical practice, safety and high-quality patient care in anaesthesia, pain medicine and perioperative medicine.

As part of my focus, I am keen for ANZCA to work closely with key health sector bodies and proactively maintain open communications. I see this as essential for one of the largest medical colleges in Australia and New Zealand.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss matters of relevance to both organisations and perhaps have in place a regular meeting touchpoint. Some of the items from my perspective include:

- Importance of private hospitals in anaesthesia and pain medicine training.
- Meeting the needs and interests of private anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians.
- Embedding perioperative medicine in private hospitals.
- ANZCA welcomes open discussion with all health bodies on ensuring equitable, affordable and timely access to anaesthesia and specialist pain medicine care, such as through reports like PHA's commissioned report on *Restoring affordable access to specialist care in Australia*.

Training in private hospitals

As you know training of specialists is usually conducted in public teaching hospital settings, however specialist training in private hospitals is increasingly common, supported by initiatives like the Australian Government's Specialist Training Program (STP) to provide trainees with experience in diverse healthcare settings beyond traditional public teaching hospitals. This offers a broader range of cases (sometimes to satisfy volumes of practice requirements), taps into hospital list capacity and provides exposure to different management styles, contributing to a more skilled and distributed specialist workforce. Training can take various forms, such as rotations into private hospitals or placements that are entirely within private facilities. These functions do

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impact private hospital decision-making and partnerships between public and private hospitals. I would like to discuss with you how private hospitals and private health insurers can continue to work together with accredited training hospitals to continue to provide robust anaesthesia and specialist pain medicine training in each relevant jurisdiction.

Meeting the needs of private providers

Based on Health Workforce Data¹, roughly 28 per cent of medical practitioners providing anaesthesia services have indicated they work in solo private practice, group private practice or locum private practice in Australia. This figure grows to 50 per cent for pain medicine where a significant proportion operate in a private hospital setting, working at multidisciplinary pain clinics or centres. These clinics or centres use the expertise of a range of medical and allied health professionals to assess the multidimensional aspects of pain and formulate appropriate programs of treatment. I would like to discuss that the needs and perspectives of private anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians continue to be understood and accounted for.

Perioperative medicine in private hospitals

Perioperative medicine is a growing area of medicine that ANZCA is leading in Australia and New Zealand, in collaboration with other relevant medical colleges.

Perioperative medicine makes surgical care more efficient and effective by integrating and personalising the care patients receive before, during, and after any surgical procedure involving anaesthesia, starting and ending with their primary referrer, usually their GP. Implementing perioperative medicine pathways creates a simpler approach to patient care, lowers the occurrence of postoperative issues and readmissions, and results in improved quality of life for the patient.

In 2023 ANZCA launched the ANZCA Course in Perioperative Medicine. The course is the first in the world to offer clinical immersion with guidance and support from graduates of the Chapter of Perioperative Medicine. Currently there are 786 graduates (comprising those that were 'grandparented'), including 17 who have completed the course since commencement. There are currently 37 hospital clinical immersion sites and we're always looking to make sure there is coverage across private hospitals as well as regional and rural sites.

I look forward to working with you and your team on these and other relevant matters.

Yours sincerely



Dr Lance Emerson
Chief Executive Officer

¹ <https://hwd.health.gov.au/>