



## ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



**New Zealand Aotearoa Neuro-Oncology Society**

Email: [info@nanos.co.nz](mailto:info@nanos.co.nz)

Website: [www.nanos.co.nz](http://www.nanos.co.nz)

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# 2024-2025 SOCIETY SUMMARY

## Members

We continue to welcome anyone interested in neuro-oncology in Aotearoa to become a member. Please contact [info@nanos.co.nz](mailto:info@nanos.co.nz) to register your membership.

## Committee members & activities

**Co-Chairs:** Dr Thomas Park - Scientific, Dr Catherine Han - Clinical

**Committee members:** Dr Dean Singleton, Mrs Caroline Woon, Dr Melissa James, A. Prof. Tania Slatter, Dr Fouzia Ziad

**Treasurer:** Dr Catherine Han

**Secretary:** Dr Susan Li

**Patient advisor:** Mr Chris Tse

**Māori advisor:** Dr Makarena Dudley

Since the AGM at the August conference in 2024, the Committee has met 4 times to discuss the running of the Society and to plan for the 2025 conference just past.

The NZ Brain Tumour Registry committee has also worked hard to set up the registry, more details later in the report.

## Events

The Society hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual NANOS Conference in Christchurch on the 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May. It was another invigorating gathering of clinicians, researchers and patient advocates, where we came together to discuss advancements in research and care for patients. For a summary of the conference, please see later in this report.

## Looking Ahead

NANOS was successful in its bid for the hosting rights of the 2028 ASNO conference! A separate conference organising committee will be formed to start the planning process for 2028 ASNO to be held in Auckland.

## Upcoming election for committee members

At the next annual NANOS conference in 2026, we will hold an election for committee members. Nominations are now open for anyone interested in becoming a committee member for NANOS. We invite nominees from all regions of Aotearoa representing different specialties.

# 2025 CHRISTCHURCH CONFERENCE SUMMARY

## Day 1

Conference opened by Te Marino Lenihan

Introduction & Welcome - **Melissa James, Gabi Dachs & Anna Arns**

### Patient Focus - Chaired by Melissa James & Chris Tse

- ⇒ Journey of a Māori Kaitiaki - **Theona Ireton**
- ⇒ BTSNZ update: Patient to Planet - Advocacy in Action - **Chris Tse**
- ⇒ Patient and caregiver stories - **Henri Kerr; Alice & Caleb Jackson**
- ⇒ Establishing our National Brain Tumour Registry - the present and the future - **Holly Wilson, Catherine Han & Thomas Park**



### Abstracts session - Chaired by Gabi Dachs

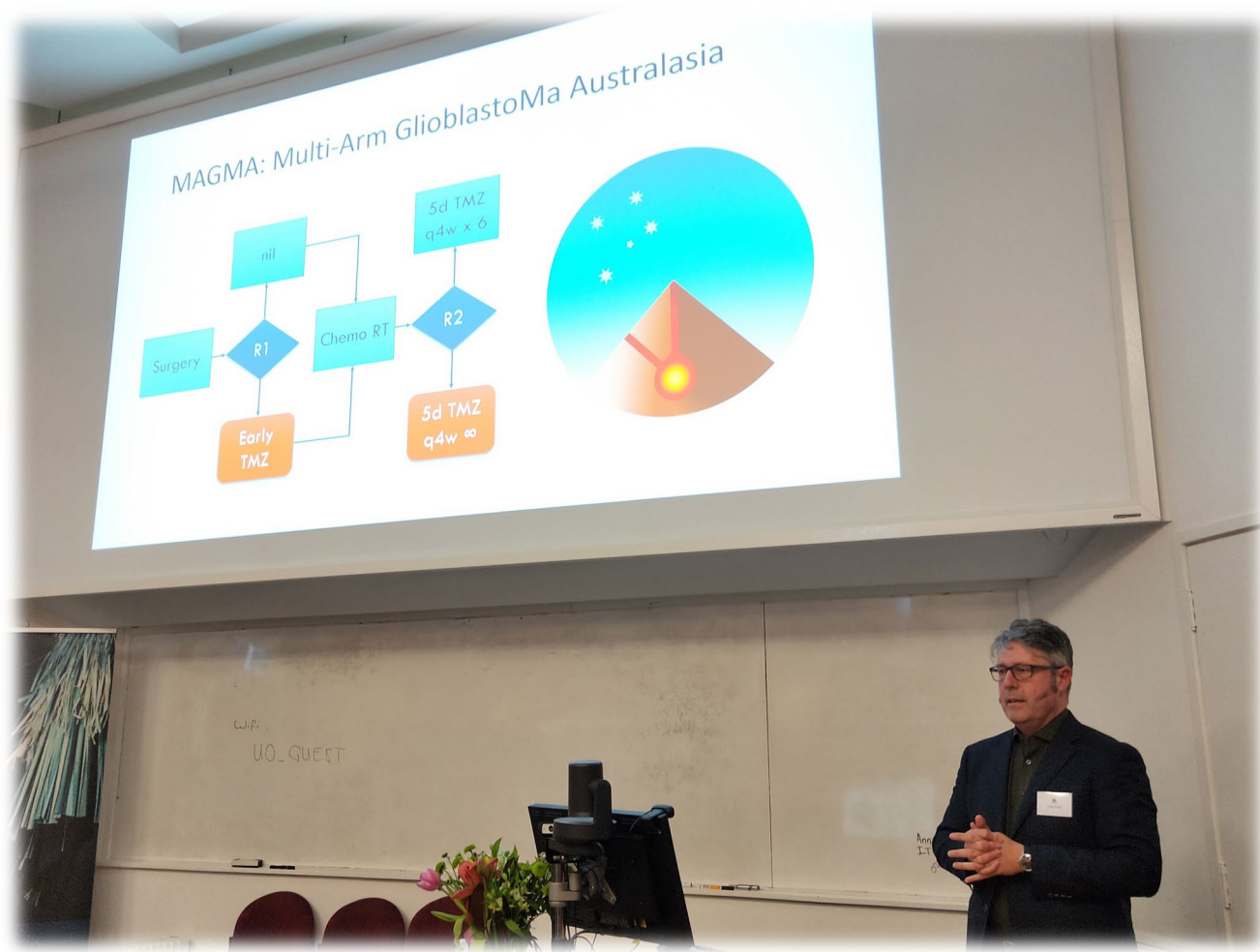
- ⇒ BCL6 can drive proliferation, resistance to therapy and tumorigenesis in a murine model of high-grade glioma - **Melanie McConnell**
- ⇒ Targeting Renin-Angiotensin System in Glioblastoma (TRAS-GB) Trial - **Dorothy Lombe**
- ⇒ Functional sodium-dependent vitamin C transporter 2 is required to modulate the hypoxic response in glioblastoma cell lines - **Citra Praditi**



- ⇒ Methylation profiling at Auckland City Hospital: the first six months - **Clinton Turner**
- ⇒ Deep learning-based classification of benign and intermediate meningiomas from tumour DNA methylation profiles - **Naima Noor**
- ⇒ Brain metastatic cancers - Melanoma cells produce LVBs that drastically disrupt the blood-brain barrier endothelium - **Akshata Anchan**
- ⇒ Iron content of clinical glioblastoma tumours - **Gabi Dachs**
- ⇒ Holistic care and spiritual support - **Colin Woodhouse**

### Keynote session - Chaired by Kate Gardner

- ⇒ Graphic medicine: Making Brain Tumour Comis - Neil Curtis
- ⇒ **Keynote:** 7373 and counting: Improving clinical trial methodology for brain cancer - **Craig Gedye**



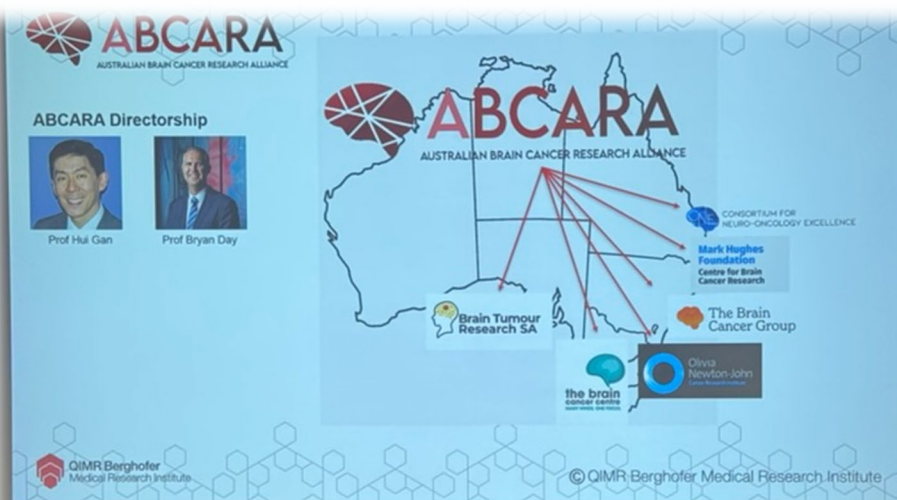
## Day 2

### Patient pathway for GBM I - Chaired by Gabi Dachs

- ⇒ Recent changes to glioma classification - **Neil Lambie**
- ⇒ Are we ready for neuro-oncology theranostics? - **Darin O'Keeffe**
- ⇒ Paediatric neurosurgery and Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) cancer - **Simon John**

### Keynote & Patient pathway for GBM II - Chaired by Simon John

- ⇒ **Keynote:** Defining Novel Antibody Drug Conjugate Targets for the Treatment of Brain Cancer - **Bryan Day**
- ⇒ Navigating the Underground blindfolded - **Michaela Jamieson**
- ⇒ Navigating the Unique AYA Brain Tumour Journey - How can we do better? - **Louise Sue**
- ⇒ Medical Oncology - **Kate Gardner**



### Patient pathway for GBM III - Chaired by Melissa James

- ⇒ What does a radiation oncologist do? - **Gillian Campbell**

- ⇒ Radiation therapy perspectives from a physicist - **Anna Arns**
- ⇒ Radiation therapy case studies - **Erika Hampton**
- ⇒ Exercise and GBM - **Margaret Currie**

**Summary and close of NANOS - Melissa James & Gabi Dachs**

**Closing karakia - Te Marino Lenihan**





## Conference dinner – Castro's Tapas (Sponsored by Decode Science)



## Prize winners

*Prizes sponsored by Servier & Elekta*

Congratulations to the winner of the abstracts session, **Akashata Anchan!**

Congratulations to the runner-up of the abstracts session, **Dorothy Lombe!**





## Acknowledgements

*We would like to thank our sponsors for kindly sponsoring this conference:*

**Servier** - Gold sponsor

**Elekta** - Gold sponsor

**Decode Science** - Gold sponsor

**Centre for Brain Research, University of Auckland** - Silver sponsor



TE HUIINGA HINENGARO  
**CENTRE FOR  
BRAIN RESEARCH**

Please contact our wonderful sponsors if you would like to further discuss any opportunities or offers.

**Elekta:** [ewa.juresic@elekta.com](mailto:ewa.juresic@elekta.com)

**Servier:** [yoz.zhang@servier.com](mailto:yoz.zhang@servier.com)

**Decode:** [support@decodescience.co.nz](mailto:support@decodescience.co.nz)

We would like to thank the Christchurch conference organising committee: **Melissa James, Gabi Dachs, Anna Arns & Kate Gardner**

We would like to thank the keynote speakers, **Dr Craig Gedye & Professor Bryan Day**, for travelling to NZ and attending our conference.

We would like to thank the **patients and caregivers** for sharing their experiences.

We would like to thank the members for attending the conference.

# UPDATES ON NZ NATIONAL BRAIN TUMOUR REGISTRY

(Prepared by NZ National Brain Tumour Registry Coordinator, Holly Wilson)

Each year around 2,400 people are diagnosed with a primary or secondary brain tumour, and we have very little data on this cohort of patients. Whilst the New Zealand Cancer Registry collects data on primary malignant brain tumours, this data is basic in its detail, and accounts for just 17% of all brain tumour patients in the country. Without a comprehensive understanding of the brain tumour landscape in New Zealand, we are unable to provide the full level of support people with brain tumours need.

NANOS have made the formation of a national brain tumour registry a key priority. At our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference in May 2025, we heard from Holly Wilson (the National Brain Tumour Registry Coordinator), Dr Catherine Han and Dr Thomas Park (registry project co-chairs). Holly provided an overview of the key research that has been conducted thus far on the New Zealand Brain Tumour Registry (NZBTR) project, whilst Catherine discussed the benefits of the project from a clinician's perspective. Thomas presented a timeline for the project, providing an overview of recent grant applications and drawing attention to key milestones that need to be achieved to make this project successful.

In the last year, Holly and the wider registry project team have spent a lot of time analysing New Zealand's neuro-oncology system and existing clinical registries in New Zealand. This work, *Establishing a New Zealand brain tumour registry: understanding clinical registry formation in New Zealand*, was published in February 2025 in the New Zealand Medical Journal and has received significant interest from clinicians and researchers across the country since its publication.

In addition, Holly and several other project team members have written a narrative review of existing brain tumour registries overseas. This paper, which is currently under review at an international journal, summarises the construction and function of brain tumour registries from nine countries: the United States, China, Japan, Canada, England, Australia, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden. This paper draws key conclusions from each of these case studies and applies them to the New Zealand context. This work will help to establish a strong foundation for the NZBTR, and we hope it will be a valuable resource for countries overseas wishing to establish similar registries.

Finally, with the support of the Deane Endowment Trust and the guidance of Dr Sandar Tin Tin (epidemiologist), Holly has spent the last several months analysing data retrieved from the New Zealand Cancer Registry. This research project has provided us with the opportunity to present the only existing data on New Zealand brain tumours across all ages, as well as to identify key problem areas in these datasets that we aim to address through the NZBTR.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this work - your expertise and willingness to help has been incredibly valuable. He waka eke noa!

If you have any questions or want to get involved in this project, feel free to contact Holly Wilson at [h.wilson@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:h.wilson@auckland.ac.nz)



# 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**Location:** Beaven Lecture Theatre, University of Otago Christchurch

**Date:** Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

**Attendees:** Thomas Park (Co-chair, scientific), Catherine Han (Co-chair, clinical), Susan Li (secretary), Caroline Woon (committee member), Dean Singleton (committee member), Melissa James (committee member), members of NANOS

**Apologies:** Tania Slatter (committee member)

**Minutes taken and organised by:** Susan Li (secretary)

**Time:** 17:15

## Minutes:

### 1. Co-Chairs' report

- a. Objectives set in previous AGM meeting from the 2024 Wellington annual conference
  - i. Set up and improve the NANOS website
  - ii. Incorporate NANOS as a member nation of ASNO
  - iii. Host an international brain tumour conference - bid for hosting at 2024 ASNO conference in Singapore
  - iv. Set-up brain tumour registry
- b. Report on the progress:
  - i. Website is active and regularly updated - used to advertise conferences, report on events, share resources; may use as a basis for brain tumour registry
  - ii. ASNO incorporation completed - Thomas and Catherine attended ASNO in Singapore 2024 and fully inducted now as a voting member of the ASNO committee
  - iii. **Successfully bid for ASNO to be hosted in NZ in 2028!**
    1. Planning now in progress - Catherine and Thomas have had a few preliminary meetings with agents/organisations that can help, including Tourism NZ
    2. Initial plan is to host Feb-April or Oct-Nov of 2028 in Auckland - as it is easiest in terms of transport for international attendees

3. Total estimated cost ~\$300K USD - registration fees will cover ~half of the cost; the rest will be raised through sponsorships, funding, and/or fundraisers
4. Estimated ~300 (up to 500) attendees
- c. Brain Tumour Registry updates:
  - i. Have applied for various large platform grants, including the Neurological Foundation grant which is at the full application stage, and the HRC grant which is currently at EOI stage
  - ii. May be useful for the ***committee to introduce a new role that can handle 'public relations'*** - helps the Society raise awareness about what we do, as well as attract funding
2. Financial report from treasurer (see also the Finance summary above)
  - a. 2024 Financial summary
3. Plans for upcoming year
  - a. NANOS 2026 Annual Meeting & AGM location - Hamilton/Waikato (?)
4. Election of Committee members
  - a. Chairs and committee members have 3-year terms, maximum 2 consecutive terms
  - b. **Nominations now open** for next Chairs/Committee members - each region and specialty need to be represented
    - i. Each region needs to have at least 1 nominee, if only 1 is nominated, that person is automatically elected to represent the region. Voting will only take place if more than 1 candidate is nominated
    - ii. We are not limited to number of committee members - currently 5 members but can have more as long as all regions are represented
  - c. The **election will be held at the 2026 AGM** - there will be a 3-6 month transition period for handover processes
    - i. Ideally, half the committee members stay for a second term and half step-down so that the transition is smooth and not too drastic
  - d. The 2028 ASNO conference will require a separate organising committee - this can overlap with the Society committee
    - i. This committee is also **open for volunteers/nominees**
5. Any other business
  - a. Big thank you to the Christchurch team for organising and for the smooth running of the conference

Meeting adjourned at 17:45