

The Robert Campbell Oration
Ulster Medical Society, 21st October 2021

Treating Cancer in the Antipodes – Professor Gerry Hanna

In his Oration Professor Gerry Hanna presented an overview of his experience in leading Radiation Oncology at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, which is Australia's largest specialist cancer centre and one of the world's leading cancer centres. Peter Mac is an integrated Cancer Centre and aims to provide world leading cancer treatment, supported through clinical trials and research.

Professor Hanna was Director of Radiation Oncology at Peter Mac from 2018 to 2021. During his time at Peter Mac, Gerry revitalised the radiation oncology department, led the implementation of a number of new radiotherapy technologies (e.g. GammaKnife, Surface Guided Radiotherapy) and led both Peter Mac and the State of Victoria's response to COVID in the Radiation Oncology Community. He and his team at Peter Mac wrote the initial COVID guidelines to support the management of patients with cancer using radiotherapy and this have adopted internationally.

Cancer survival outcomes are better for patients in Australia as compared to Northern Ireland. In this Oration, Professor Hanna reflected on potential reasons for this difference and what we can do to improve our cancer treatment outcomes. Finally, he reflected on a potential new initiative which seeks to rebuild the clinical trial environment over the next 5-years.

Finally, Professor Hanna was kind enough to answer a variety of questions from audience members, with a particular focus on translating lessons from his Australian experience to fostering a better culture, and outcomes, in healthcare across Northern Ireland.