# FSRACA National 2026 Conference Report

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**Conference : FSRACA National 2026 conference**

**Location : Gold Coast, Queensland Australia**

**Conference dates:** 30/09/2026 to 02/10/2026

## 1. Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the WA SRACA Managing Committee for awarding me the scholarship to attend the three-day FSRACA National 2026 Conference on the Gold Coast.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the conference, attend the educational sessions, and learn from experienced professionals in the field. Many of the topics discussed were familiar to me from my experience in the pharmaceutical industry and, more recently, in the Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) operations. However, the sessions provided valuable new insights, reinforced existing knowledge, and highlighted opportunities for improvement in CSSD practices.

I have summarised the key discussions, learnings, and recommendations from the sessions below.

## 2. Executive Summary

The FSRACA National 2026 Conference provided valuable insights into current practices, emerging technologies, quality assurance, risk management, workforce development, and sustainability in sterile services and endoscopy reprocessing.

The key themes included improving patient safety through effective cleaning and sterilisation, strengthening validation and documentation processes, using electronic tracking systems to support evidence-based decision-making, improving workforce competency, and ensuring that CSSD capacity aligns with operating theatre requirements.

The conference also highlighted the potential benefits of automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and improved data analysis in enhancing consistency, traceability, efficiency, and quality outcomes.

The knowledge gained from the conference can support continuous improvement within CSSD operations. The recommendations outlined in this report focus on reviewing current practices, identifying gaps, improving staff training, strengthening compliance, and presenting evidence-based proposals to management for appropriate resources and future development.

# 3. Key Conference Sessions and Learnings

## 3.1 Dr David J. Weber — Reusable Versus Single-Use Duodenoscopes

The presentation examined the use of reusable and single-use duodenoscopes and the associated risks of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

**Key takeaways:**

- The study discussed the potential for infection transmission associated with reusable duodenoscopes and the considerations supporting the use of single-use devices.
- The majority of the audience voted in favour of single-use scopes.
- The environmental impact of disposing of non-biodegradable single-use devices remains a significant sustainability concern.
- The use of strong high-level disinfection (HLD) chemicals also presents potential occupational health and safety (WHS) risks to staff.

**Recommendations:**

- Explore the potential benefits of brushless automated endoscope reprocessors (AERs), where appropriate.
- Ensure that technicians responsible for endoscope reprocessing are appropriately trained and competent.
- Review emerging low-temperature sterilisation technologies for longer endoscopes, subject to appropriate validation, regulatory requirements, and manufacturer instructions.
- Consider infection prevention, staff safety, environmental impact, and overall costs when evaluating reusable and single-use devices.

## 3.2 Mr Anthony Valvoi — Independent Validations

The presentation highlighted the importance of independent validation and the ongoing monitoring of sterilisation equipment performance.

**Key takeaways:**

- Performance qualification (PQ) activities should be closely monitored by the CSSD Quality Assurance (QA) Lead.
- The calibration status of equipment used by external validation agencies should be verified.
- Photographic records of steriliser loads used during validation should be retained and displayed for reference where appropriate.
- Annual PQ should be undertaken in accordance with applicable requirements and the relevant validation schedule.
- All validation activities, reports, and supporting documentation should be properly recorded and retained for future reference.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish a structured schedule for validation and review of activities.
- Maintain complete records of calibration certificates, validation reports, and relevant photographic evidence.
- Ensure that any identified deviations are documented, investigated, and resolved appropriately.

## 3.3 Mr John Kimsey — The Business of CSSD

The presentation focused on the importance of recognising CSSD as a critical service and demonstrating its operational and financial value to senior management.

**Key takeaways:**

- Recruitment should consider cultural fit, attitude, and suitability for the role, in addition to qualifications and technical skills.
- CSSD managers should communicate the department's importance to senior management.
- Data and reports generated through electronic tracking systems can help demonstrate workload, productivity, and resource requirements.
- Full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing requirements should be calculated using production and workload reports.
- Electronic tracking data can help identify peak production periods and support more effective staff allocation and shift planning.

**Recommendations:**

- Use evidence-based reports to demonstrate the value and workload of CSSD.
- Review staffing requirements against production volumes and operational demands.

- Present data-supported business cases to management when requesting additional staffing, equipment, or funding.

## 3.4 Ms Laina Mc Cormack — Manual Cleaning with or Against the Current

The presentation focused on effective manual cleaning and the correct selection and use of cleaning brushes for complex medical instruments.

**Key takeaways:**

- Selecting the correct cleaning tool and brush size is essential for effective cleaning.
- Manual cleaning or pre-cleaning remains important for complex instruments when required by the manufacturer's instructions.
- Brushes must be appropriate for the design and dimensions of the instrument.
- Circular brushing techniques were discussed as a means of improving cleaning effectiveness.
- Brushes should be appropriately sized for the internal diameter of cannulated instruments.
- Some brushes have blunt tips designed to assist with the removal of heavy soil, while the bristles help remove residual contamination.

**Recommendations:**

- Review the availability and suitability of cleaning brushes used in CSSD.
- Ensure staff understand the correct brushing technique for different instrument types.
- Reinforce compliance with manufacturers' instructions for use (IFUs).
- Provide regular training on the effective cleaning of complex and cannulated instruments.

## 3.5 Ms Nicole Lapanatis — Is Your Load Wet?

The presentation explored possible causes of wet loads following sterilisation.

**Key takeaways:**

Potential contributing factors include:

- Incorrect or unsuitable sterilisation cycles.
- Performance qualifications are not completed in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Failure to consider the product family when developing and validating sterilisation processes.

- Insufficient cooling time following sterilisation.

Heavy metal instruments may require longer cooling periods because of their thermal mass and the heat retained after the cycle.

**Recommendations:**

- Investigate wet loads systematically rather than treating them as isolated incidents.
- Review cycle selection, load configuration, validation records, and product-family requirements.
- Ensure adequate cooling time is allowed before handling or releasing loads.
- Document investigations and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

## 3.6 Mr Bob Hunt — The Hidden Cost: Performance Will Be Determined in the CSSD

The presentation highlighted the importance of understanding the actual costs associated with CSSD operations.

**Key takeaways:**

- The cost of processing each instrument tray should be calculated and communicated to management.
- Electronic tracking systems can provide useful data for cost analysis and operational reporting.
- Future equipment purchases should be planned and discussed well in advance.
- Gap analysis should be conducted to identify deficiencies and compliance risks.
- The cost of producing reverse osmosis (RO) water should be included in operational cost assessments.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop a cost-per-tray model that considers labor, consumables, equipment, utilities, water treatment, maintenance, and other relevant expenses.
- Use reliable operational data to support budget planning and resource allocation.
- Conduct regular gap analyses and present the findings to management.
- Review the financial implications of future equipment purchases and upgrades.

Any proposal to recover reprocessing costs through surgical charges should be assessed against the organization's financial policies and applicable funding arrangements.

## 3.7 Mrs Allison Stewart — Making Professional Development Positive

The presentation discussed strategies for encouraging continuous professional development (PD) among CSSD staff.

**Key takeaways:**

- Professional development should be included in departmental budgets.
- Staff should be encouraged to undertake further education and training.
- Career progression and recognition should reflect qualifications, demonstrated competency, and performance.
- Apprenticeships and formal CSSD training pathways can support workforce development.
- The presentation discussed maintaining industry currency in New Zealand and the potential role of ongoing professional requirements in encouraging continuous learning.

**Recommendations:**

- Allocate an appropriate annual budget for staff education and professional development.
- Develop individual training and career progression plans.
- Encourage staff to undertake relevant CSSD courses, apprenticeships, and competency assessments.
- Explore appropriate recognition and career development opportunities to improve staff engagement and retention.

## 3.8 Ms Rosalie Staggard — Sterilisation Services Training Package

The presentation provided an update on the review of sterilisation services training packages.

**Key takeaways:**

- The HLT37015 Certificate III in Sterilisation Services was described as containing 14 units.
- The proposed revised training package was reported to include 16 units.
- Changes to HLT47015 were also discussed, including the removal of existing units and the introduction of new units.
- The revised training package had reportedly reached the endorsement stage at the time of the presentation.

**Recommendations:**

- Monitor updates to the relevant national training packages.
- Review how any approved changes may affect staff qualifications and training requirements.
- Ensure that future staff development plans reflect the applicable training package and qualification requirements.

*Note: The training package codes, unit numbers, and endorsement status should be verified against the official training package information before implementation.*

## 3.9 Ms Brooke Hanson — When Silver Is Gold

The presentation focused on resilience, personal development, and maintaining a positive mindset.

**Key takeaways:**

- Never give up: get up and rise again.
- Small changes can lead to significant results.
- Pressure can be viewed as a privilege and an opportunity for growth.
- The way we present ourselves and respond to challenges matters.
- Self-care supports better energy, wellbeing, and performance.

**Application to CSSD:**

These principles can help staff and leaders manage workplace pressure, respond positively to challenges, and maintain a focus on continuous improvement and personal wellbeing.

## 3.10 Dr David J. Weber — Risk of Disease Transmission

The presentation reinforced the importance of effective cleaning before low-temperature sterilisation.

**Key takeaway:**

Low-temperature sterilisation cannot compensate for inadequate cleaning. Residual soil and contamination may compromise the effectiveness of subsequent reprocessing and increase the risk of infection transmission.

**Recommendations:**

- Reinforce the importance of thorough cleaning before sterilisation.
- Ensure that all reprocessing steps follow the relevant IFUs and validated procedures.
- Investigate cleaning failures and process deviations promptly.

- Provide ongoing staff education on the relationship between cleaning effectiveness and patient safety.

## 3.11 Mrs Annie Watt — STERIS: Automation in Action

The presentation explored the benefits of automation in reprocessing.

**Key takeaways:**

- Automation can reduce waste and process variability.
- Mapping value streams can help identify opportunities to improve workflow.
- Technology should be selected to address specific operational needs and improve efficiency.

**Recommendations:**

- Review CSSD workflows to identify repetitive tasks and opportunities for automation.
- Conduct value-stream mapping to identify bottlenecks and unnecessary process steps.
- Evaluate automation solutions based on safety, compliance, efficiency, cost, and measurable outcomes.

## 3.12 Ms Chiara Taranto — AI-Assisted Smart Table

The presentation examined how artificial intelligence and smart-table technology could support instrument inspection and verification.

**Key takeaways:**

- Technology can assist staff in checking whether instruments and sets are complete, correct, and ready for the next stage of processing.
- AI is intended to support staff rather than replace human judgement.
- Such systems may be particularly helpful in supporting new staff while improving consistency.
- Potential benefits include improved consistency, competency support, and traceability.

**Recommendations:**

- Explore the suitability of AI-assisted technologies for instrument assembly and inspection.
- Assess the accuracy, reliability, and compatibility of available systems with existing workflows.

- Consider staff training, data management, and quality assurance requirements before implementation.

## 3.13 Mr Wi Guo — Selecting Suitable Cleaning Indicators

The presentation discussed the selection and application of cleaning indicators in CSSD.

**Key takeaways:**

- The selection and use of cleaning detergents should follow validated procedures and manufacturers' instructions.
- The presentation discussed the use of enzymatic and alkaline detergents and the importance of the correct cleaning sequence.
- Cleaning indicators should be appropriately selected and linked to cleaning validation activities.

**Recommendations:**

- Review the suitability of cleaning indicators for the equipment and instruments being processed.
- Confirm detergent compatibility, concentration, temperature, and sequence requirements against validated procedures.
- Ensure that cleaning indicators are used and interpreted correctly.
- Document cleaning performance monitoring and investigate unsatisfactory results.

## 3.14 Mr Andrew Gay — Performance Qualification Assessment Criteria

The presentation focused on performance qualification and the assessment of sterilisation processes.

**Key takeaways:**

- The presentation discussed a critical point within cannulated instruments, referred to in the notes as the “salt point,” where steam penetration and temperature conditions require careful assessment.
- Validation results should be verified through comparison with an independent temperature reference source.

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure that PQ activities are conducted in accordance with applicable standards and validation requirements.

- Confirm the correct terminology and technical interpretation of the critical point discussed during the presentation.
- Maintain traceable calibration records for temperature sensors and reference equipment.
- Ensure validation results are reviewed and approved by appropriately qualified personnel.

## 3.15 Dr Victoria Mc Creanor — Where Lean Meets Sustainability

The presentation explored the relationship between lean principles, cost management, and sustainability.

**Key takeaway:**

Lean thinking provides a way to identify costs, waste, and inefficiencies while improving the use of available resources.

**Recommendations:**

- Review CSSD workflows to identify unnecessary movement, delays, rework, and resource wastage.
- Consider sustainability when evaluating consumables, equipment, and processes.
- Monitor improvement initiatives to ensure that cost reductions do not compromise quality or patient safety.

## 3.16 Ms Tracey Duffy — Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

The presentation highlighted the importance of regulatory compliance when purchasing products for CSSD.

**Key takeaway:**

The Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) should be checked where applicable when assessing medical devices and other therapeutic goods for purchase.

**Recommendations:**

- Verify relevant ARTG information for products where registration or inclusion is required.
- Confirm that products are suitable for their intended purpose and meet applicable regulatory requirements.
- Maintain appropriate procurement and compliance records.

## 3.17 Mr Alejandro Ramirez — Low-Temperature Steam and Formaldehyde (LTSF) as a Complementary Tool for Endoscope Biofilm Inactivation

The presentation examined the potential use of low-temperature steam and formaldehyde technology in relation to endoscope biofilm inactivation.

**Key takeaways:**

- Biofilm consists of microbial cells embedded within a surrounding matrix and associated microenvironment.
- The presentation discussed low-temperature steam and 2% formaldehyde as part of the technology under consideration.
- Further evidence and research are needed to establish its application and effectiveness.

**Recommendations:**

- Monitor emerging research and evidence relating to biofilm inactivation.
- Evaluate any proposed technology against applicable standards, regulatory requirements, and manufacturers' instructions.
- Do not introduce new reprocessing methods without adequate evidence, validation, and approval.

## 3.18 Ms Beth Wardle — Infection Prevention and Control in Endoscopy: 2025 Guidelines

The presentation discussed infection prevention and control requirements in endoscopy, including the reprocessing and storage of endoscopes.

**Key takeaways:**

- Appropriate reprocessing and storage are essential to maintaining endoscope safety.
- The presentation noted that endoscopes left outside the designated storage cabinet may require complete reprocessing.
- A new product referred to in the notes as “Plasma Typhoon” was also mentioned.

**Recommendations:**

- Review current endoscope storage and handling procedures against applicable guidelines and manufacturers' instructions.
- Ensure staff understand the requirements for endoscopes that have been removed from designated storage.

- Investigate the suitability and regulatory status of any new technology before considering implementation.

*Note: Confirm the exact product name and the specific circumstances in which complete reprocessing is required against the relevant guideline and manufacturer instructions.*

## 3.19 Mr Darren Gount — Transforming Loan Equipment Management

The presentation focused on the safe and effective management of loan equipment.

**Key takeaways:**

- The receipt, processing, tracking, and return of loan equipment must be properly documented.
- Data relating to loan equipment should be presented to management to demonstrate workload and resource requirements.
- CSSD staff require appropriate training to manage loan equipment safely and efficiently.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish or review a standardised process for receiving, checking, tracking, reprocessing, and returning loan equipment.
- Maintain complete documentation and traceability.
- Assess the additional workload and costs associated with loan equipment.
- Review any cost-recovery arrangements in accordance with organisational policy and applicable funding requirements.
- Provide specific training for staff involved in loan equipment management.

## 3.20 Mr David Bellamy — Risk Management

The presentation discussed risk identification, analysis, mitigation, and accountability in CSSD.

**Key takeaways:**

- Risk analysis should be performed systematically.
- Technology can assist in identifying, monitoring, and managing risks.
- CSSD technicians should understand their responsibilities and be accountable for following approved procedures.
- Shared recall experiences provided opportunities to learn from previous incidents.

**Recommendations:**

- Maintain an up-to-date CSSD risk register.
- Review incidents, recalls, and near misses to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Establish clear responsibilities for risk assessment, escalation, and corrective action.
- Use technology where appropriate to strengthen traceability and risk monitoring.

## 3.21 Mr Bob Hunt — Capacity to Complexity

The presentation highlighted the importance of aligning CSSD capacity with operational demand and the increasing complexity of surgical instruments and procedures.

**Key takeaways:**

- CSSD capacity should be planned according to the growth and requirements of operating theatres.
- The complexity of instruments and reprocessing requirements should be considered when assessing workload.
- New technologies may offer opportunities to improve productivity and manage operational pressures.

**Recommendations:**

- Review CSSD processing capacity against operating theatre activity and projected growth.
- Assess staffing, equipment, space, and workflow requirements.
- Identify bottlenecks and evaluate appropriate technology solutions.
- Develop a capacity plan that supports current needs and future service expansion.

## 3.22 Mr James Osborne — The Broader Quality and Risk Management Responsibilities

The presentation examined wider quality and risk management responsibilities within CSSD.

**Key takeaways:**

- Water quality is an important consideration in CSSD operations.
- Cost alone is an inadequate basis for management decisions.
- Instrument reprocessing must consider function, performance, and safety.
- Equipment or instrument failures should be investigated, with findings used to guide corrective actions.
- Clear accountability is required for investigating failures and managing device-related risks.

- Procurement decisions should consider whether instruments and equipment meet operational expectations.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish and maintain a comprehensive CSSD quality management plan.
- Investigate process deviations and equipment failures promptly rather than allowing them to become routine.
- Define responsibilities for reporting, investigating, and managing risks associated with instrument and equipment failures.
- Ensure procurement decisions consider safety, quality, reliability, suitability, and whole-of-life costs.
- Review water quality monitoring and corrective action processes regularly.

## 3.23 Ms Surani Mc Caw — Preventing Failures in Hospital Reverse Osmosis Systems: Ensuring Compliance, Reliability, and Longevity

The presentation focused on the importance of maintaining reliable RO water systems in healthcare facilities.

**Key takeaways:**

- CSSD should monitor RO system maintenance and review the associated records in collaboration with the engineering team.
- The RO system must be designed appropriately for its intended purpose.
- Potential causes of failure include design weaknesses, gaps in monitoring, and inadequate monitoring of microbiological growth.
- Routine testing and monitoring are essential, but long-term system performance must also be assessed.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish clear responsibilities for RO system maintenance and monitoring.
- Review maintenance records and monitoring results regularly with engineering.
- Confirm that the system design and performance meet the requirements of CSSD operations.
- Investigate recurring failures and implement corrective and preventive actions.
- Ensure appropriate monitoring of water quality and microbiological parameters.

### 3.24 Mr Antony Kocheril — Riding the Waves

The presentation addressed the management of pressure and unexpected operational challenges in CSSD.

**Key takeaways:**

- CSSD should maintain a documented contingency plan for equipment breakdowns and other operational disruptions.
- CSSD capacity and available space must be considered alongside operating theatre requirements.
- Communication with nearby CSSD departments may provide additional support during major disruptions.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop, review, and periodically test contingency plans.
- Establish clear escalation and communication procedures for equipment failures and capacity constraints.
- Identify alternative arrangements for maintaining essential services during disruptions.
- Consider collaborative arrangements with nearby facilities where appropriate.
- Ensure contingency plans prioritise patient safety, traceability, and compliance with reprocessing requirements.

# 4. Overall Key Learnings

The conference reinforced several important priorities for CSSD operations:

1. **Patient safety and infection prevention:** Effective cleaning, appropriate sterilisation, validated processes, and correct storage practices remain fundamental to safe instrument reprocessing.
2. **Quality assurance and validation:** Equipment performance, calibration, validation, and documentation must be monitored systematically.
3. **Evidence-based management:** Electronic tracking systems and production reports can support staffing decisions, workload analysis, cost calculations, and budget requests.
4. **Workforce development:** Ongoing education, competency assessment, professional development, and structured career pathways are important for maintaining a skilled CSSD workforce.

5. **Technology and automation:** Automation and AI-assisted systems may improve consistency, efficiency, and traceability when appropriately evaluated and implemented.
6. **Risk management and accountability:** Incidents, recalls, process deviations, and equipment failures must be investigated and used as opportunities for improvement.
7. **Water quality and sustainability:** Reliable RO water systems, efficient resource use, and sustainability considerations should form part of CSSD planning.
8. **Capacity planning and business continuity:** CSSD resources must align with operating theatre demand, increasing instrument complexity, and future service requirements.

# 5. Recommended Action Plan

Based on the conference learnings, the following actions are recommended for consideration within our CSSD.

## Immediate Actions

- Review current cleaning, sterilisation, storage, and validation procedures against applicable requirements and manufacturers' instructions.
- Review validation records, equipment calibration certificates, and corrective action documentation.
- Examine wet-load incidents and other process deviations to identify recurring issues and opportunities for improvement.
- Review loan equipment management procedures and staff training requirements.
- Confirm the applicable ARTG and regulatory requirements when purchasing relevant products.

## Short-Term Actions

- Use electronic tracking and production reports to analyse workload, staffing requirements, peak production periods, and processing costs.
- Conduct a gap analysis covering equipment, staffing, workflow, documentation, water quality, and compliance.
- Review professional development opportunities and identify training priorities for CSSD staff.
- Assess contingency arrangements for equipment breakdowns, water system failures, and unexpected increases in workload.
- Share the key conference findings with the CSSD team through a staff meeting, short educational session, or internal presentation.

### Long-Term Actions

- Develop an evidence-based business case for equipment upgrades, automation, or AI-assisted technologies where these offer demonstrable benefits.
- Review CSSD capacity in line with projected operating theatre growth and increasing instrument complexity.
- Develop a comprehensive cost-per-tray analysis to support budgeting and resource planning.
- Strengthen collaboration between CSSD, infection prevention and control, engineering, procurement, theatre management, and quality assurance teams.
- Monitor changes to relevant training packages, guidelines, technologies, and regulatory requirements.
- Continue evaluating opportunities to improve sustainability without compromising patient safety or reprocessing effectiveness.

# 6. Conclusion

Attending the FSRACA National 2026 Conference was a valuable professional development opportunity. The sessions provided useful insights into the challenges and opportunities facing CSSD services, particularly in the areas of patient safety, validation, workforce competency, technology, cost management, and risk mitigation.

The conference reinforced the importance of evidence-based decision-making, continuous improvement, and effective communication between CSSD and other departments within the organisation.

I am grateful to the WA SRACA Managing Committee for providing the scholarship that enabled me to attend this conference. I intend to share the knowledge gained with my colleagues and apply the relevant learnings to support ongoing improvements in CSSD quality, efficiency, compliance, and patient safety.

Thank you once again to the WA SRACA Managing Committee for supporting my professional development and providing this valuable learning opportunity.

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