

In fine focus

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It's been a month since the third Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) Endoscopy Masterclass took place at The Westin hotel, and we're still relishing the experience. It was an event that provided an unbeatable opportunity for international collaboration, education, research and training.

It was a pretty special feeling after all to see some of the most prominent physicians in Australia and the world, sharing their knowledge and demonstrating their skills with an endoscope – right here in Perth, one of the most isolated capital cities in the world.

We looked on – like nervous, proud parents – as WA Minister for Science and Innovation and Medical Research Stephen Dawson opened the conference for 160 delegates.

We crossed our fingers that the hi-tech system beaming 10 live endoscopy procedures from two RPH operating suites into the conference hall wouldn't need emergency resus – we're pleased to report we made it through!

Perhaps the most heartfelt interactions came early in the day, when patients Keith Britton and Joanne Simpson bravely shared their experiences before and after their life-changing procedures at RPH.

Keith stumbled as he walked onto the stage, but that didn't stop the resilient 79-year-old from disclosing how swallowing difficulties caused by Inclusion Body Myositis, the degenerative neurological condition he lives with, had placed a massive dampener on his life.

He went on to share how the revolutionary endoscopic procedure – Cricopharyngeal Per-Oral Endoscopic Myotomy (C-POEM) – has since helped him regain more than 90% of his swallowing function, allowing him to enjoy his favourite meal of liver and bacon.

This is why we do it! Better outcomes for our patients.

How do we do it? As generations of clinicians will testify... we keep learning and innovating.

The Endoscopy Masterclass was born out of this passion to keep learning. And to enable local medical professionals to access world-class professional development right here in WA – without having to travel over east or internationally.

In early 2023, various interactions we had with fellow gastroenterologists and trainees revealed a vacuum in exposure to international collaboration, education, research and training in Gastrointestinal (GI) Endoscopy.



Prof Krish Ragunath & Dr Nirosan Muwanwella address delegates at the RPH Endoscopy Masterclass.

Our training in WA is of a high standard, but there's no denying we lack the international challenge and exposure.

So, we began reaching out to our contacts. We relied on our professional relationships and friendships, hoping our peers around the world would see the potential of a truly interactive learning day. They did!

Earlier this year, we reached out to Professor Nageshwar Reddy – possibly India's busiest doctor, as founder and chair of the renowned 1,000-bed Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG), the biggest in the world. He is undoubtedly India's most celebrated doctor – the only clinician to have received three of India's highest civilian honours.

Would Prof Reddy agree to travel almost 7,000km from Hyderabad in southern India and deliver the keynote address at our Masterclass here in Perth?

His resounding "yes" provided a massive fillip to the event, with other eminent physicians also agreeing to attend.

Their didactic lectures interspersed with insightful panel discussions and live procedures only served to enhance a highly rewarding day of immersive learning.

Feedback over the past month has been deeply encouraging. Our masterclass has evolved from humble beginnings and we have many people to thank, including the East Metropolitan Health Service leadership for allowing us to pursue our organisational value of excellence.

The RPH Endoscopy Masterclass will return in 2026, as part of Australian Gastroenterology Week (AGW) taking place in Perth after 19 years. More than 2,000 delegates from the Asia Pacific region will converge for this historic event, and RPH will be one of three centres to stream live endoscopies into the conference.

Our Masterclass is certainly helping Perth embed itself on the global map as a centre for world-class medical care, training and education in GI Endoscopy. ■

