NSW Cancer Research Education

Cancer Surgery Prehabilitation

Statewide Seminar Series 2026
Tuesday 21 April, 12.30 - 1.30 pm



Dr Jennifer Mackney

Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist
& Clinical Research Fellow
Hunter New England LHD



Shane McAuliffe

Senior Dietitian
Chris O'Brien Lifehouse
PhD Candidate, UNSW Sydney



Prof Daniel Steffens

Senior Principal Research Fellow
NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Sydney

21 APRIL 2026 | **12:30 PM – 1:30 PM** | **Online Webinar**

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The Research Capacity Building Grants are supported by Cancer Institute NSW

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NSW Regional Cancer Research Network

Maridulu Budyari Gumal
Cancer Clinical Academic Group

Session Information

In this webinar we will hear from three clinician-researchers who will discuss their work in cancer surgery prehabilitation. Jenny will present on the development and scaling of the C-SPRITES multimodal prehabilitation model of care, for people living with cancer in regional and rural NSW. Shane will then explore the critical role of nutrition as a core pillar of oncology prehabilitation, highlighting how targeted nutrition care can mitigate the adverse impacts of malnutrition and sarcopenia and optimise patient readiness prior to cancer surgery. Finally, Daniel will present a comprehensive, system-level model of cancer surgery prehabilitation, spanning risk stratification (PREdiCT), personalised care models (PRIMS), and scalable digital interventions (PRIORITY-CONNECT SMS and Home) to improve outcomes and access at scale. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A.

Speakers



Dr Jennifer Mackney is a physiotherapist and clinician-researcher with a strong commitment to delivering evidence-based, patient-centred care, with a particular focus on equity of access. She currently works as a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist in perioperative medicine at John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, and as a Senior Respiratory Scientist, where she leads the cardiopulmonary exercise testing service for both diagnostic purposes and surgical risk stratification. Jenny leads a multidisciplinary team of clinician-researchers dedicated to translating and evaluating evidence-based prehabilitation interventions across John Hunter Hospital and regional and rural New South Wales. Her research is supported by the Cancer Institute NSW, the NSW Regional Cancer Research Network, and the Hunter Medical Research Institute.



Shane McAuliffe is a Senior Dietitian and Clinician Researcher at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse (COBL) and a PhD Candidate at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). His work is focussed on the implementation of evidence-based nutrition guidelines for patients undergoing surgery for Head and Neck Cancer (HNC). This work has resulted in the formation of a pre-surgical, supportive care led pathway which has provided a foundation to support wider development of a multimodal prehabilitation program. He is also a contributor to a national implementation toolkit to support the uptake of the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA) Cancer-Related Malnutrition and Sarcopenia Position Statement recommendations into clinical practice.



Professor Daniel Steffens is an international leader in surgical trials and cancer (p)rehabilitation. He holds appointments as Senior Principal Research Fellow at the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, University of Sydney; Senior Director of the Surgical Outcomes Research Centre (SOuRCe) at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; Director of the Evidence-Based (P)Rehabilitation Research Group; and is a Cancer Institute NSW Career Development Fellow. He leads a team of over 35 researchers across 250 research projects, with national and international programs spanning trials across 31 hospitals and 19 countries. He is Founder of the Global (P)Rehabilitation Initiative and the inaugural World Prehabilitation Day (September 2026), with a research program centred on improving surgical outcomes and expanding access to high-quality cancer care and clinical trials for all communities.

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