

New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology

Eru Pomare Medal and Award

Established in 2021, this medal and recognition honours an individual or group who has contributed significantly to the field of gastroenterology in New Zealand. This is the highest honour NZSG can award. It is awarded every 1 to 2 years, if suitable nominations are received.

Background

Dr Eru Woodbine Pomare (1942-1995) was a highly regarded Gastroenterologist and Dean of the Wellington Medical School. He is also remembered for his contribution to Māori health.

Eru Pomare was of Ngati Mutunga, Te Atiawa, Ngati Toa, Rongomai-wahine, Ngati Kahungunu and Rongo Whakaata descent. He was a Ngarimu VC Scholar at Otago Medical School, graduating in 1966. After graduation he worked in Bristol as a Commonwealth Scholar where he began his work on nutrition and completed his MD thesis on studies of the gallbladder and bile salt metabolism. He began work at the Wellington School of Medicine in 1975 and in 1986 was appointed Professor of Medicine. In 1993 he became Dean of the School, whilst continuing his clinical work, research and publications and leadership in Māori Health.

Eru, was a well-respected and renowned research scientist, clinician and leader in Medicine, Public Health and Māori Health. He was a pioneer in a number of areas, some of which are only now being recognised many years after his death.

Most of his research work was on improving understanding of how the gut works and in particular colon physiology. From his initial studies on bile salt metabolism, he moved on to a sabbatical at Cambridge resulting in landmark papers in the understanding of metabolism of dietary fibre and short chain fatty acid production and absorption. The low FODMAP diet, effective in managing symptoms of functional gastrointestinal disorders, is based on principles Eru's research identified.

Nutrition was a key interest for Eru, and he worked with both Māori and Pacific Island communities to understand traditional diets and effects on digestive health. Māori health continued to be a focus, with him volunteering his time in remote areas to assess patients with Hepatitis B, promote vaccination, encourage better dietary choices and reduce rates of smoking. There was a huge amount of work with the Māori Women's Welfare League, educating women about the collection of health data that was recognised by awarding him Honorary Membership of the League.

Eru was a great teacher and mentor. He supervised several MD (Doctor of Medicine) and PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) theses. His research and teaching accomplishments were recognised by him first becoming a Professor of Medicine and then the Dean of the School of Medicine. He held executive office with the New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology, including President, as well as being involved with the Royal

Australasian College of Physicians, Medical Council, Cancer Society, Heart Foundation, Hillary Commission and Health Research Council to name a few

What was possibly most important for Eru was clinical medicine, helping the patient and supporting people in general to encourage them to achieve goals. Patients would travel from all over New Zealand to see him, and even now, years after his death, his old patients and colleagues still talk of how great he was.

The NZSG Award recognises a Member of the Society who has demonstrated excellence in an area or areas of Eru's work – teaching, research, nutrition, clinical gastroenterology, public health, Māori health and leadership.

Eligibility

All nominations are submitted online by a primary nominator who is an NZSG member. The name of 1 additional NZSG member who supports the nomination should be listed on the nomination form. The nomination deadline is 1 July from 2023, and by October 31 in 2022.

Any member of NZSG is eligible for nomination.

Ineligible nominees are those who:

- submit a nomination on their own behalf
- are a past recipient of the Eru Pomare Medal and Award

Prize

The Eru Pomare Medal and Award recipient receives:

- A medal or taonga, made by an Aotearoa New Zealand Artist that they keep in recognition of this honour
- A certificate
- Presentation of the taonga and certificate at the NZSG ASM in person (preferred option), via video conference (under pandemic conditions) or in their absence (as a last resort)
- Support to register and attend the ASM and receive the award can be provided on a case-by-case basis
- The Eru Pomare Medal and Award recipient has an option to give a short oration at a suitable time in the ASM schedule
- The award recipient will be published on the NZSG website and newsletter.
- Recipients will be listed on the NZSG website.

Acknowledgement of nominees:

The current stance is that all other nominees are kept confidential to the nominator, the Executive and Selection Committee. The Aotearoa New Zealand gastroenterology is small, and nominees may be put forward in subsequent years. This stance can always be reviewed in time.

Selection criteria

The Eru Pomare award aligns with the RACP College motto 'hominum servire saluti' — 'to serve the health of our people' — and recognises an NZSG member's contribution towards the improvement of the health of the community and/or our members.

The assessment of the nominee's contribution in relation to others is an essential part of the nomination.

In your nomination, detail how the nominee's contributions have meaningfully impacted NZSG, the gastroenterology community and the people we serve, and its activities against all of the selection criteria:

1. Contribution to medical practice, healthcare and/or health of communities

How has the nominee made a significant contribution to gastroenterology practice through professional activities?

2. Professional Leadership

How has the nominee displayed outstanding leadership in developing and promoting local, national and/or international initiatives? What has been the significant impact to medicine and/or health of communities?

3. Advocacy

What significant advocacy has the nominee performed on behalf of gastroenterology that reflects the mana, wairua e mahi of Eru Pomare? This includes teaching, research, nutrition, clinical gastroenterology, public health, patient centred care, Māori health, leadership, policy, mentorship, team work and equity (including honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in a healthcare context).

4. Representation

How has the nominee played integral roles in:

- establishing and maintaining relationships and/or collaborations with international or domestic healthcare and gastroenterology organisations on behalf of the speciality?
- promoting NZSG members and their interests within Aotearoa New Zealand and a global context?

Selection process

The NZSG Executive reviews all nominations, involving 3-4 NZSG long standing leaders such as past presidents and office holders in a Selection Committee as and when required. It is expected that this process will evolve with time.

The NZSG Executive reserves the right not to award the Eru Pomare Medal and Award if they feel the recommendation and/or all nominations presented don't sufficiently meet the criteria. This is of particular importance to the Pomare whanau; that the medal is awarded to deserving participants and not 'just because'. If, for example, there is one year with two deserving recipients, and one year with none, that is acceptable.

To nominate member for the award please complete the [application form](#) if you wish to supply additional information on the nominee please send this to office@nzsg.org.nz