

19 August 2021

RACS phases out gendered titles for surgeons

Dear colleagues and partners

We are pleased to share that the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is phasing out the use of gendered titles such as Mr or Ms. Instead, we would like to encourage you to use Dr or appropriate academic titles such as Professor.

As we know, gendered titles started in the 18th century within a certain context that is not relevant to surgical practice today.

Surgery is the only profession to continue to use gendered titles in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. The New Zealand Defence Force and Australian Defence Force have dropped the use of gendered titles, as have the police forces in both countries. In government and business, gender-neutral titles, language and terminology is considered best practise.

Many of our own members have called for all surgeons to be referred to as 'Dr', recognising that gendered titles are discriminatory and divisive.

Gendered titles for surgeons create power and status differences between surgeons and other medical professionals, male and female surgeons, and women who are married and women who are not. Removing gendered titles further cements RACS's commitment to improving gender equity, building respect and demonstrating inclusion amongst the surgical workforce. [Read further in this backgrounder](#) about the use of gendered titles in surgery.

We are proud that we are taking steps to move the College into the future, as a modern organisation that moves with the times.

The College will use the title 'Dr' to refer to surgeons and we encourage you to make this change in your private or personal practices. We are mapping out what this change will look like for College marketing material, on our website, and in College correspondence, and we will update you as soon as these details are finalised.

[Read more in our media release.](#)



Sally Langley
President



John Biviano
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Committed to
Indigenous health