



**MEDIA RELEASE– 30 November 2021**

**Plastic Surgeons welcome Ahpra review into Cosmetic Surgery regulation**

The Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) welcomes the announcement of a review by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the Medical Board of Australia (AMC) into cosmetic surgery to consider how it can improve its regulations and regulatory practices to protect patient safety.

Among the areas to be reviewed will be the updating of codes and guidance; the monitoring and regulation of advertising and social media; and ensuring practitioners practice safely within the scope of their qualifications, training and experience.

The announcement of the review follows a number of high profile media reports exposing dangerous clinical practices and flagrant abuse of social media by individual practitioners of cosmetic surgery.

“To hold a medical license is to hold a position of privilege and trust and too many practitioners of cosmetic surgery space have been shown to have abused that trust and compromised patient safety with appalling consequences including massive physical disfigurements and even death” said ASPS President, Dr Dan Kennedy.

“Tightening of regulations is necessary, and so too is strong enforcement of these regulations. Penalties must be strengthened to provide a genuine disincentive against risky behaviour – small fines and warnings are not enough.

“We see too many practitioners putting profit over patient safety and using social media irresponsibly to advertise their businesses in a way that we believe misleads consumers.”

In Australia a wide array of practitioners perform cosmetic surgery - many of whom have only minimal medical qualifications - yet most identify themselves as cosmetic ‘surgeons.’

This has led to Health Ministers announcing a national consultation on changing the national law to protect the title of ‘surgeon’ so there is transparency regarding the actual training and qualifications of practitioners.

“We believe the most effective ways to ensure consumers identify practitioners of cosmetic surgery who have received the ‘gold standard’ surgical training in Australia is to educate them about the importance of looking for a ‘FRACS’ surgeon and understanding the significance of this title,” said Dr Kennedy.

Founded in 1970, the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons Inc (ASPS) is the peak body for Specialist Plastic Surgeons (both reconstructive and cosmetic). Its mission is to provide the highest quality plastic surgery care to all Australians.



In Australia the AMC (Australian Medical Council) accredited training for cosmetic or aesthetic surgery is conducted under the imprimatur of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and is as part of the Plastic and Reconstructive Training SET (Surgical and Education Training) program delivered by the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons.

All surgery, including cosmetic surgery, carries risk and possibility of complications, which is why it is important consumers understand the value and depth of the RACS training.

Entry into this highly-competitive, five-year program is undertaken by medical graduates and is subject to ongoing assessment and review. After successful completion of the program graduates are entitled to call themselves specialist plastic surgeons and become Fellows of the RACS (FRACS).

The Surgical Education and Training curriculum is under constant review and improvement and opportunities for aesthetic/cosmetic training ensure all graduates receive comprehensive, world-class training in aesthetic and cosmetic surgery covering all areas of the body and face.”

This is not to be confused with a ‘FACCS’ which is an unrecognised title awarded by the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine and is not subject to Australian government oversight and accreditation. A previous application by the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine and to the AMC for accreditation was unsuccessful.

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