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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Call to strengthen accreditation on cosmetic surgery**

The national peak body for cosmetic surgery and medicine, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine (ACCSM, College), calls upon federal and state health ministers to adopt urgently its proposal for a new national accreditation standard for all doctors performing cosmetic surgery.

Revelations made on ABC's Four Corners on 25 October 2021, highlighted dangerous and unacceptable practices and the consequences for patients.

ACCSM President Dr Patrick Tansley said patients need to be protected.

"Patients need to be able to identify easily those practitioners who are trained and safe in cosmetic surgery so that they are protected before they undergo surgery and not just having to make complaints after they have been harmed," Dr Tansley said.

"Currently that is not the case as any medical practitioner can currently call themselves a cosmetic surgeon."

The Australian Medical Council (AMC), the independent national standards body for medical education and training, recently found that plastic surgeons trained by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons had a 'deficit' in their experience of cosmetic surgery and qualify with 'a gap' in this area of practice.

Tragically, the only death of a cosmetic surgery patient in Australia where inadequate surgical training was a causal factor, occurred at the hands of a specialist plastic surgeon whose liposuction patient believed he was competent *because* he was a specialist plastic surgeon. In contrast, the Victorian coroner who investigated her death noted that *'irrespective of a practitioner's provenance or primary qualifications, there was a need for specific training and experience in performing liposuction surgery.'*

"This is why all doctors, plastic surgeons and cosmetic surgeons alike need to have to meet a national competency standard based on essential training, qualifications and recertification in cosmetic surgery," Dr Tansley said.

"This would ensure that all doctors, including specialist plastic surgeons, who call themselves cosmetic or aesthetic plastic surgeons would need to have achieved an independently

assessed benchmark of relevant training, qualifications and experience specifically in cosmetic surgery. They would also be subject to ongoing recertification requirements.

“The ACCSM has also proposed an AHPRA-Register of all medical practitioners performing cosmetic surgery who have met and maintain the Standard. Only those on it would be able to use the title ‘cosmetic surgeon’ or ‘cosmetic or aesthetic plastic surgeon.’

This solution was presented to the COAG Health Council in early 2021 and last month to the Senate Inquiry and means all doctors performing cosmetic surgery would have to meet a National Competency Standard based on essential training, qualifications and re-certification specifically in cosmetic surgery.

Despite the AMC’s concerns about their lack of cosmetic surgery training, plastic surgeons opposed this solution in the Senate Inquiry. Instead, their suggested solution is to ban the title cosmetic surgeon, an approach which was tried and failed in Queensland a decade ago.

“In the interests of patients, we ask the plastic surgeon societies to drop their opposition to the National Standard and work cooperatively with other surgical groups and regulators to make it happen,” Dr Tansley said.

“No trained and competent doctor concerned about patient safety should object to a formal Accreditation Standard.”

## **Media enquiries**

Georgina Hall  
0420 571 720  
[ghall@apollo.sydney](mailto:ghall@apollo.sydney)

Irina Kamychnikova  
0426 221 550  
[ikamychnikova@apollo.sydney](mailto:ikamychnikova@apollo.sydney)

## **About the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery & Medicine**

Established as the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery in 1999, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery & Medicine (ACCSM) is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary fellowship-based body of cosmetic surgeons, cosmetic physicians, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors and health care practitioners who practice in cosmetic medicine and surgery. The primary goal of the ACCSM is to ensure the safe provision of cosmetic medical and cosmetic surgical procedures to the Australian community through the supply of appropriately trained and certified health care practitioners. The ACCSM is the only medical college which provides education and training leading to fellowship specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. Fellows of the College are medical doctors who have completed post-graduate education and training and demonstrated competency specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. For additional information about the ACCSM, please visit: <http://www.accsm.org.au/>