

10 JUNE 2022

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**60 MINUTES INVESTIGATION REINFORCES NEED FOR ACTION**

**Mandatory independent accreditation for all doctors performing cosmetic surgery cannot be delayed any longer.**

THE peak national body for cosmetic surgery and medicine is today calling for urgent change so Australians are better protected. The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine (“ACCSM” or “The College”) is seeking regulatory intervention to fix the troubled system, following further shocking revelations made last night.

An investigation aired on 60 Minutes on Thursday 9 June 2022, revealed examples of cosmetic surgery risks being downplayed, patients being placed in danger and a broken system that allows for any doctor to call themselves a cosmetic surgeon and practice cosmetic surgery. Alarming, this applies whether or not they have any training whatsoever in cosmetic surgery.

**THE SOLUTION – MANDATORY INDEPENDENT ACCREDITATION FOR ALL DOCTORS PERFORMING COSMETIC SURGERY**

ACCSM President, Dr Patrick Tansley, said the investigation highlighted once again the urgent need for regulators to act to protect patients.

“The solution is simple and it is staring us in the face - an independent National Accreditation Standard for all Doctors performing cosmetic surgery. The Standard must ensure **CORE** surgical training and competence, along with **SPECIFIC** training, qualifications, competency and recertification in cosmetic surgery and will prevent the abhorrent and dangerous practices exposed by 60 Minutes.

The regulatory mechanism to enact this is already available under the National Law. Doctors who meet the Accreditation Standard would be Endorsed by AHPRA to perform cosmetic surgery and patients could readily identify them either by asking the Doctor or checking on AHPRA’s website.

If patients are to be truly protected, this independent competency standard must apply to **ALL** doctors who perform cosmetic surgery. This is because patients being harmed by surgeons inadequately trained in cosmetic surgery applies equally to specialist plastic surgeons as it does to other practitioners,’ Dr Tansley said.

In April 2022 the Australian Senate Inquiry reported that complaints relating to cosmetic procedures received by AHPRA between 2018-2021 concerning ‘botched surgeries’ or a surgical outcome with a complication or resulting in injury, were attributed to 183 practitioners, and of these practitioners “...52 per cent are registered in a surgical specialty (mostly specialist plastic surgeons’).”<sup>1,2</sup>

In its **2017 Report**, the Australian Medical Council (AMC) stated in relation to cosmetic surgery that plastic surgical trainees have a ‘*lack of training*’, a ‘*deficit*’ in experience available and qualify with ‘*a gap in this area of practice*’<sup>3</sup>. The AMC’s latest **2021 Report** shows that these problems remain current<sup>4</sup>.

‘The evidence that patients are at risk and being harmed is compelling. In such light, no trained and competent doctor concerned about patient safety should object to a formal Accreditation Standard leading to an Endorsement by AHPRA to practice cosmetic surgery.’

“The ACCSM is asking Health Ministers, the Medical Board of Australia and AHPRA to protect patients by acting urgently to implement a National Accreditation Standard”, concluded Dr Tansley.

#### **WARNING ON BRAZILIAN-BUTT-LIFTS**

For several years, the College has publicly advised patients not undergo a Brazilian Butt Lift procedure as the risk of death is so high, at about one in 3,000 procedures.

Dr Tansley said no-one should be performing this procedure.

“It is considered the most dangerous of all aesthetic surgical procedures and we call on all Australian cosmetic and plastic surgeons to put safety first and not perform this procedure,” he said.

- ENDS -

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<sup>1</sup> Fletcher M. Answers to written Questions on Notice, received from AHPRA. 11 October 2021 [Available from: [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Community\\_Affairs/AHPRA/Additional\\_Documents?docType=Answer%20to%20Question%20on%20Notice](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/AHPRA/Additional_Documents?docType=Answer%20to%20Question%20on%20Notice)].

<sup>2</sup> Senate Community Affairs References Committee Report into Administration of registration and notifications by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and related entities under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. 1 April 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Medical Council. Specialist Education Accreditation Committee. Accreditation Report: The Training and Education Programs of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Medical Council. Specialist Education Accreditation Committee. Accreditation Report: The Training and Education Programs of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. 2021.



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