

19 July, 2022

**Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine**  
**statement concerning Professor Allan Fels**

Recently the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine (the College) became aware of commentary by Professor Allan Fels relating to the regulation of cosmetic surgery.

We contacted Professor Fels to discuss his remarks, which appeared to reflect an imperfect understanding of the College's position. The College therefore asked Professor Fels to review his remarks in light of the College's longstanding advocacy for the independent regulation of cosmetic surgery, including its submission to the recent Senate Inquiry. Professor Fels was asked to clarify any suggestion that the College seeks to become the sole credentialing body for cosmetic surgeons in Australia or is opposed to independent regulation.

The College's raison d'être is to raise standards and to protect patients. Consistent with its long-held position, the College has strongly advocated for and would welcome independent regulation of cosmetic surgery in Australia, much tighter training and regulation and either the recognition of cosmetic surgery as a discrete area of specialisation or the creation of an AHPRA-administered public register of practitioners Endorsed under the National Law to perform cosmetic surgery.

The College is concerned that the remarks attributed to Professor Fels have the potential to cause serious harm and are defamatory of the College and its office holders. It therefore served Professor Fels with formal Notice of Concerns under the Defamation Act, seeking redress including by means of a retraction and apology.

The College is pleased that matter has now been settled to its satisfaction on terms that include the provision of the attached open Statement under the hand of Professor Fels. Professor Fels now acknowledges the College's position in relation to the independent regulation of cosmetic surgery and corrects his position in relation to his article.

Please see Professor Fels' Statement attached.

**Statement of Professor Allan Fels AO**

On 28 October 2021 I wrote an opinion piece in The Sydney Morning Herald entitled “Cosmetic surgery industry needs more than a tummy tuck”.

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine (the College) and its office holders have complained about the article.

They are concerned that the article suggests that the College is opposed to the independent regulation of cosmetic surgery in favour of a pretence of training and certification, and is a haven for cosmetic cowboys, that is to say doctors who exploit their patients by performing cosmetic surgery with reckless disregard for patient safety.

I acknowledge that the College has stated, including in submissions to the Senate Inquiry, that it supports the independent regulation of cosmetic surgery. My article did not use the words "cosmetic cowboys", which was an editorial headline inserted at publication. It was not my intention that the article convey this. If, however, the article was taken to say this, I reject that suggestion.

Signed: 