MEDIA RELEASE

An accreditation standard for all doctors performing cosmetic surgery cannot be put off any longer

The peak body providing training and qualifications in cosmetic surgery, is calling for a national accreditation system for all doctors performing cosmetic surgery. The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) agrees with the College of Anaesthetists, The College of Surgeons and its plastic surgery society to call for greater regulation of cosmetic surgery but believes even stronger measures are needed if the public is to be properly protected.

Following the ACCS alerting the authorities to the dangerous anaesthetic practices associated with two cardiac arrests at the The Cosmetic Institute in Sydney, the College worked with the NSW government to ensure invasive cosmetic surgery must be performed in licensed hospitals with proper oversight. The College is pleased that Queensland is enforcing similar regulations this week.

“It is not only where procedures are performed that is critical to patient safety, but who is performing them,” said the President of the ACCS, Dr Ron Bezic.

“Because cosmetic surgery is not yet considered a separate and distinct discipline in Australia, the Australian Medical Council has not assessed the cosmetic surgery training of any surgeon, including plastic surgeons” continued Dr Bezic. “The public cannot therefore rely on the specialist register to know whether a doctor has sufficient, or indeed any, cosmetic surgery specific training. This has to change and it is beyond time for formal accreditation.

The ACCS is submitting a proposal to Health Ministers for an accreditation system for all doctors performing cosmetic surgical procedures. This will allow the public to distinguish surgeons with cosmetic surgery training, relevant qualifications and relevant continuing medical education from those who do not.
“Cosmetic surgery transcends several different specialised groups of doctors and is not “owned” by any one of them. In the past, turf disputes have prevented progress to protect patients who remain confused and frankly fed up with competing claims from different Colleges and Societies. It is time to set professional and financial considerations aside and we look forward to working cooperatively with the plastic surgeons and other groups to ensure an accreditation system that benefits patients first and foremost is finally put into place,” concluded Dr Bezic.

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**About the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery**

The College was established in 1999 as a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary college of general surgeons, cosmetic surgeons, plastic surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, cosmetic physicians, dermatologists, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors who practice in cosmetic medicine and surgery.

The College acts as an expert advisor to the TGA, state and federal health departments, AHPRA and other statutory complaints bodies. The College developed the only Code of Conduct for cosmetic surgery which was approved by the ACCC.

The primary goal of the ACCS is to ensure the safe provision of cosmetic medicine and cosmetic surgical procedures to the Australian community through the supply of appropriately trained and certified health care practitioners.

The ACCS is the only medical college which provides education and training leading to fellowship by examination specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. Fellows of the College are medical doctors who have completed post-graduate education and training and have demonstrated competency specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. To become an ACCS Fellow, doctors must typically complete a minimum 12 years medical and/or surgical education and training.