



## **The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery**

### ***Raising Standards, Protecting Patients***

**TUESDAY 14 AUGUST 2018**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CALL FOR AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN GUIDELINES ON COSMETIC SURGERY**

Australia's peak body for cosmetic surgeons, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS), has called on federal and state governments to strengthen its guidelines to protect the thousands of Australians seeking cosmetic procedures each year.

The call to introduce a national accreditation system for any practitioner undertaking cosmetic surgical procedures, follows revelations made on ABC's Four Corners program on 13 August 2018, highlighting how some practitioners are putting patients' lives in danger.

The program exposed the high-volume, low cost practices of The Cosmetic Institute (TCI), at Parramatta and Bondi Junction. Practitioners at TCI, which were trained and overseen by an Australian plastic surgeon, rendered some patients unconscious during procedures when they were only licensed to provide conscious or 'twilight' sedation.

Senior members of the ACCS initially alerted authorities to the dubious practices at TCI in 2015, in the interests of public safety.

ACCS Vice-President Dr Patrick Tansley said up to five types of medical operators were calling themselves 'cosmetic surgeons' when most did not have the professional authority to do so, leading to confusion among patients and regulators.

"Almost anyone on the medical practitioner spectrum can call themselves a cosmetic surgeon, from 'fly-in, fly-out' operators, registered GPs and plastic surgeons, right up to the highest standard of Fellow of the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery," Dr Tansley said.

"Patients have no way of knowing whether their surgeon is properly qualified and has undergone specific training in cosmetic surgery.

"Australia's most highly trained cosmetic surgeons are usually ACCS Fellows. They are regularly called upon to correct botched procedures performed by untrained and inexperienced practitioners.

“The current system is a complete lottery for patients. There is no simple, national and easily recognisable way for patients to know whether they are in safe hands.

“ACCS Fellows have the strongest credentials in the practice of cosmetic surgery, including two years of mandatory dedicated cosmetic surgery training, following 4-6 years earning a medical degree, and a further five years surgical experience. No other body has the same degree of rigour and standards for cosmetic surgery.”

Whilst the ACCS acknowledges there are some talented plastic surgeons in Australia, the country’s peak medical training regulator, the Australian Medical Council (AMC), last year found plastic surgeons trained by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons had a ‘deficit’ in their experience of aesthetic surgery and a ‘gap’ in this area of practice. Read the AMC’s report [here](#) (pg. 123).

In comparison, only Fellows of the ACCS have mandatory two years specialised cosmetic surgery training.

The ACCS is calling on the Australian Health Minister, Greg Hunt, to bring together the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, state ministerial colleagues and other stakeholders to develop a system of accreditation to provide better and safer outcomes for patients.

**Table 1: Types of surgeon performing cosmetic surgery in Australian in 2018**

Type of surgeon	Minimum years of training	Detail
<b>1 Cosmetic surgeon (ACCS Fellow)</b>	12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years</li> <li>• 5 years postgraduate surgery experience</li> <li>• <b>Mandatory 2 years</b> ACCS specialized cosmetic surgery training</li> </ul>
<b>2 Plastic surgeon (RACS Fellow and Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) Member)</b>	12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years</li> <li>• 5 years postgraduate surgery experience</li> <li>• <b>Optional six months</b> ASPS specialized cosmetic surgery training</li> </ul>
<b>3 General practitioner (RACGP Fellow)</b>	7-11 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years</li> <li>• 3-5 years postgraduate study</li> <li>• <b>Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training</b></li> </ul>
<b>4 Registered medical practitioner</b>	5-7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years</li> <li>• 1 year internship</li> <li>• <b>Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training</b></li> </ul>

5	Fly in fly out practitioner with no qualifications	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training</li> </ul>
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The top five most popular cosmetic surgical practices in Australia include anti-wrinkle injection, fillers, laser and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL), breast augmentation and reduction and liposuction including:

- \$350 million worth of Botox procedures
- 20,000 breast augmentation surgeries and
- 30,000 liposuction procedures.

The ACCS has also published a patient [factsheet](#) with key questions everyone should ask before undergoing cosmetic surgery.

In April 2018, New South Wales Department of Health issued its [Look Beyond The Surface of Cosmetic Procedures](#) report, recommending tighter regulations for cosmetic procedures and urged consumers to be more cautious of budget deals and amateur practitioners.

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### About the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Established in 1999, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary fellowship based body of Cosmetic Surgeons, cosmetic physicians, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, dermatologists, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors and health care practitioners who practice in cosmetic medicine and surgery.

The primary goal of 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 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. To become an ACCS Fellow, doctors must typically complete a minimum of 12 years of medical and surgical education and training. For additional information about ACCS, please visit: <http://www.accs.org.au/>