

An open letter to Australia's Health Ministers

From the Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons, the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners, the Australian College of Perioperative Nurses, the Australian Orthopaedic Association and the Breast Surgeons of Australia and New Zealand

Australia's medical community supports wide-reaching reform to the cosmetic surgery sector to protect patient safety, prevent life-threatening complications, and reduce undue pressure on emergency departments and the health system.

We welcome reforms to cosmetic surgery spearheaded by Australia's Health Ministers. We are committed to working collaboratively with state and federal governments and our members to support implementation of these reforms.

However, the proposed endorsement for cosmetic surgery requires an urgent rethink.

It undermines Australia's established surgical standards and legitimises the activities of unscrupulous operators who have knowingly performed invasive surgery on vulnerable patients without the required training.

It also creates unnecessary confusion for consumers, who have only recently begun to understand how to engage a Registered Surgical Specialist and make informed decisions about cosmetic surgery.

Australia's Health Ministers have rightly agreed to restrict the use of the title 'surgeon'. However, restricting the title surgeon, while also endorsing unqualified medical practitioners to perform cosmetic surgery, will only confuse the public. It will be patients who pay the highest price.

Cosmetic surgery is invasive surgery. It is permanent, carries serious risks and sometimes lengthy recovery time.

Only Registered Surgical Specialists who have undergone surgical training and hold a Fellowship from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS) or equivalent should be eligible to perform cosmetic surgery.

We stand united in calling for Australia's Health Ministers to uphold the highest standards of patient safety in Australia and ensure FRACS becomes the benchmark for endorsement.

Yours sincerely

