



ANZCA
FPM

President
Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Thursday 18 November 2021

HMM Secretariat
Ministry of Health
Level 7, 1 Reserve Road
St Leonards NSW 2065

By email:

Dear Ministers,

Regulation of cosmetic surgery

Recent media attention surrounding alleged unsafe practices by dermatologist Dr Daniel Lanzer has underscored the urgent need for further, uniform regulation of the cosmetic surgery industry in Australia.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), including the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), is committed to high standards of clinical practice in the fields of anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine. As the education and training body responsible for the postgraduate training programs of anaesthesia and pain medicine for Australia and New Zealand, ANZCA is committed to ongoing continuous improvement, promoting best practice, and contributing to a high quality health system.

We have been working to enhance patient safety and care in day procedure centres for many years. Due to the extensive training in sedation safety that our fellows receive, it would always be our preference that anaesthesia is performed by a specialist anaesthetist. However, we recognise that due to both cost and scarcity of specialist staff, this cannot always be achieved while maintaining patient accessibility for lower-risk procedures. Therefore, we work to provide guidance and leadership to other specialties in safe sedation techniques.

In September 2017, following media reports of the death of a NSW patient by overdose of local anaesthesia during a breast implant procedure, we wrote to all state Health Ministers seeking to meet, and advocating for minimum standards in day procedure centres in relation to staff, facility, equipment and emergency planning. Shortly afterwards, we reached consensus with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons and published a joint [Position Paper on Day Surgery in Australia](#).

In 2018, we gave a detailed submission to the second round of consultation on the review of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law*, advocating that the title 'surgeon' should only be used by those who have undertaken specialist training in surgery. Similarly, the term 'cosmetic surgeon' should be able to be used only by those medical practitioners who have undertaken a well-defined, recognised cosmetic surgical training program and who also undertake continuing professional development within that specialty. A patient attending a practitioner who calls themselves a surgeon has the right to assume that the practitioner has met specified training requirements.

Now in 2021, ANZCA has a Memorandum of Understanding with 27 health practitioner stakeholder groups to collaborate on the review of ANZCA's professional document [PS09 Guideline on sedation and/or analgesia for diagnostic and interventional medical, dental or surgical procedures](#). The aim is to achieve a consensus on how

sedation will be performed and by whom, across all health practice areas in Australia and New Zealand. However, such a voluntary consensus at a clinical leadership level necessarily lacks the force of law.

Given the seriousness of the risk to patient safety that an unregulated cosmetic surgery industry continues to pose, we urge Ministers of Health and the Health Council to act in concert to establish a clear regulatory framework for doctors practising cosmetic procedures, and to move to protect the titles of 'surgeon' and 'cosmetic surgeon' by law.

I look forward to your response. For any further information, please contact Mr Anthony Wall, General Manager, Policy, via email policy@anzca.edu.au or telephone (03) 9510 6299.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vanessa Beavis', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Vanessa Beavis
President