



ANZCA
FPM

President

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Wednesday 1 December 2021

Dr Anne Tonkin
Chair, Medical Board of Australia
Level 7, 111 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Via email

Cc. Mr Andrew Brown
Reviewer, Review of the Regulation of Health Practitioners in Cosmetic Surgery

Dear Dr Tonkin

Ahpra and Medical Board review of cosmetic surgery checks and balances

Recently, I wrote to the members of the Health Council to urge Australia's ministers of health to take urgent action to strengthen the regulatory framework for doctors practising cosmetic procedures following recent media attention.

The college welcomes the review announced yesterday by Ahpra and the Medical Board into patient safety issues in the cosmetic sector and how to strengthen risk-based regulation of practitioners in the industry. As I noted in my letter to the Health Council (please see attached correspondence), ANZCA has been working to enhance the safety and care of patients undergoing cosmetic procedures performed by non-specialist plastic surgeons for many years.

While much of the media attention has focussed on the non-specialist cosmetic 'surgeons' often performing these procedures, of equal concern are the standards of day procedure centres in terms of appropriate staffing, hygiene and sterilisation protocols and emergency planning and equipment.

Further, while the college would prefer that anaesthesia is performed by specialist anaesthetists, we recognise that practitioners with diverse qualifications and training are administering a variety of medications to patients to allow such procedures to be performed. In the Four Corners 'Cosmetic Cowboys' feature, one particularly disturbing clip showed practitioners dancing while performing a liposuction procedure. We note that the 'anaesthetist' in this clip is not a fellow of the college and is not participating in the college's CPD program.

It is also concerning that, in the minds of many in the general public, 'sedation' is a risk-free or minimal-risk procedure. For these reasons, the college has been at the forefront in leading the development of standards and guidelines to improve patient safety and care in day procedure facilities. While the recent focus has been on patients undergoing cosmetic procedures, the same issues apply in a range of other common situations such as diagnostic, interventional medical and dental procedures.

As the leading authority in Australia and New Zealand on sedation, anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine, ANZCA looks forward to contributing to the review and would welcome

the opportunity to participate more formally through membership of an advisory group to the reviewer as outlined in the review's terms of reference.

I look forward to your response. For any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at president@anzca.edu.au or Ms Clea Hincks, Executive Director, Policy and Communications at chincks@anzca.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

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

Dr Vanessa Beavis
President



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: MOH-NSWIGR@health.nsw.gov.au

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