

Senator Marielle Smith
Chair, Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

24 February 2023

Via email:

Re: Misleading testimony by Martin Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Dear Senator

I write in relation to evidence provided by Mr Martin Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency before the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs on Thursday, 16 February 2023.

The Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons submits that the following commentary by Mr Fletcher in relation to a proposed endorsement model for cosmetic surgery is false and should be corrected:

*Essentially an endorsement is, if you like, a regulatory tool that would land on the public register for those practitioners who have met the requirement for that endorsement. Essentially, the endorsement will set a training standard for cosmetic surgery, because that doesn't currently exist, and the review called that out. **There are no current training standards for people doing cosmetic surgery.** Because it's on the register, patients will be able to see who meets that standard. I think it's really important to say that we want and expect that to be a high standard.*

The current training standard for medical practitioners performing cosmetic surgery is a Fellowship from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. This training standard is well established and accredited by the Australian Medical Council (AMC).

Only upon successful completion of this AMC accredited training and passing the necessary exams is a medical practitioner eligible to be registered as specialist plastic surgeon in Australia. Currently there are around 540 Specialist Plastic Surgeons in Australia. Mr Fletcher's statement is at odds with these facts.

Any commentary suggesting that there is no existing training standard for cosmetic surgery perpetuates a falsehood that has only served to legitimise the actions of medical practitioners who have knowingly operated on vulnerable Australians without any surgical qualifications.

For this reason, I would appreciate your assistance in requesting that Mr Fletcher correct the record as soon as possible. I look forward to the Committee's response.

Yours sincerely

Dr Timothy Edwards MBBS MS FRACS FAICD
Specialist Plastic Surgeon and President, Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons