

16 March 2023

Senator Marielle Smith
Chair, Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: Community.Affairs.Sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator

Correspondence from the Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons about my testimony at supplementary budget estimates

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to respond to correspondence from Dr Timothy Edwards, President, Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ASAPS) claiming I gave misleading testimony at my recent appearance at supplementary budget estimates.

Senator Ruston asked about how a registration standard (for an area of practice endorsement for cosmetic surgery) or an endorsement would work. My response to the Senator's question was to explain the process and was clearly placed in the context of the findings and recommendations of the *Independent review of the regulation of medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery* (the independent review) and Health Ministers' support for standing up an area of practice endorsement (see my emphasis in bold below).

*Our only goal is to ensure that patients who choose cosmetic surgery are safe in making that choice. So in terms of the endorsement process, **the independent review that we commenced that reported in September last year made a recommendation that we should develop an endorsement for cosmetic surgery.** That recommendation was part of the package we said to ministers that we would send to all health ministers. It was **supported by the health ministers.** 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.***

Basically, as you say, endorsement is in addition to being a fully qualified medical practitioner. The process essentially is the same process that the Australian Medical Council uses for accrediting specialist training by all specialist medical colleges. The Australian Medical Council, the independent accrediting authority, is leading a process to actually develop and currently, as you say, consult on what that standard might be and the sort of outcomes you would expect of anybody undertaking a qualification that met that standard. Their recommendation will then need to go to the Medical Board of Australia, which ultimately needs to accept the recommendation of the AMC about that standard. (page 36 of transcript).

The independent review examined the regulatory approach of Ahpra and the Medical Board of Australia to medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery with a focus on consumer safety and made recommendations about actions that will better protect the public. The full independent review report is available from our [cosmetic surgery hub](#).

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
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The review found that when it comes to cosmetic surgery,

universal minimum standards for education, training and qualifications are non-existent in Australia. It is therefore possible for any medical practitioner to offer and perform invasive cosmetic surgical procedures without having undertaken appropriate training or having amassed sufficient supervised experience to reach an acceptable level of competency. In these circumstances, consumers are largely left on their own when it comes to selecting a practitioner to perform cosmetic surgery, having to sift through a plethora of advertising and marketing material and try to make sense of numerous qualifications, in an attempt to identify a qualified and competent practitioner (page 5, independent review report).

Specialist registration is available to medical practitioners who have been awarded a qualification following completion of an Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredited specialist medical program. A Fellowship from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in the field of plastic surgery enables graduates to seek specialist registration as a plastic surgeon and once registered, use the protected title of Specialist Plastic Surgeon.

As the independent review noted, cosmetic surgery is not recognised as a medical specialty. Until the Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Cosmetic Surgery Programs of Study are approved, and programs are assessed and accredited against the standards, there are no accredited training programs.

Should you have any queries about this response, please do not hesitate to contact Andrea Oliver,
Program Manager, Government Relations via email: _____ or phone: _____

Yours sincerely

Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer