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<b>Manual:</b>	<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>Ref. No.:</b>	<b>FES_FES_2256_P</b>
<b>Division:</b>	<b>Fellowship and Standards</b>	<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>OCTOBER 2006</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ADVERTISING GUIDELINES FOR FELLOWS</b>	<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>OCTOBER 2009</b>
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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the College's guidelines for Fellow's advertising practices.

## 2.0 KEY DIRECTION STATEMENT

As a fellowship based organisation, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons commits to ensuring the highest standard of safe and comprehensive surgical care for the community we serve through excellence in surgical education, training, professional development and support.

## 3.0 VALUES

- Service and Professionalism
  - performing to and upholding the highest standards
- Integrity
  - upholding professional values
- Respect and Compassion
  - being sympathetic and empathetic
- Commitment and Diligence
  - being dedicated, doing one's best to deliver
- Collaboration and Teamwork
  - working together to achieve the best outcome

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

The College acknowledges that as times change, so may values and attitudes. Over the last few years, there has been a relaxation of the rules prohibiting advertising by professionals, and this has impacted on both the medical and legal professions.

For the medical profession, prohibition of advertising was aimed at preserving some decorum and dignity and preventing a descent to the standards of commercialism with the possibility of denigration of colleagues, the use of testimonials, the making of unsubstantiated claims for cure or relief and ultimately, increased costs to the patient.

On the other hand, it may be argued with some force, that advertising is good and praiseworthy in that the dissemination of public information is encouraged, thereby improving knowledge and education and allowing patients to exercise choice in a more informed manner.

The appropriateness of advertising will change with time and may even differ among regions. The views of colleagues are critical in the assessment of what is fair and reasonable at a particular time. Advertising is one area of professional affairs where surgeons ought to practise self-regulation successfully. Fellows are encouraged to discuss these matters with their Regional Committee or refer them to the Ethics Committee or to the Council of the College.

Much of the moral objection to advertising by surgeons is not so much concerned with the act of itself, but rather with the content, colour and nature of the advertising. The following guidelines are aimed at providing a balance, giving due weight to both societal and professional forces and values in action at the present time in Australia and New Zealand. Please refer to Section 6.2; Advertising in the Code of Conduct for further information.

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## **5.0 BODY OF POLICY**

- 5.1 Advertising should provide information about services available. It should contain statements of fact, be truthful and honest and not be misleading nor likely to deceive in any way.
- 5.2 Where a particular service is advertised, a personal audit of the service should be available for the prospective patient to inspect upon request. This audit should contain a statement of complications and outcomes for the particular surgeon as well as an explanation of the procedure. It should not contain any testimonials.
- 5.3 Advertising should not be sensational nor in poor taste.
- 5.4 Advertising should not claim superiority over like colleagues in any way, nor should it demean nor denigrate another person or group.
- 5.5 Advertising should not create expectations in a prospective patient which are unjustifiable or unachievable.

**Approver** Director  
**Authoriser** Council