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# ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **RACS signs MoU with Monash Health on Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety**

**Friday 29 April, 2016**

Monash Health and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) today forged a landmark agreement to build respect and improve patient safety in surgery.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), both agencies will maximise information sharing and commit to working together to deal more effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the surgical workplace.

“Our hospital wards, operating theatres and outpatients are where surgical education and health service employment overlap,” said the President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Professor David Watters OBE.

“It makes sense for employers and educators to look for ways to improve the experience of surgical trainees, make hospitals a better and safer place to work and also improve patient safety,” he said.

“This partnership with RACS will provide a physically and psychologically safe workplace where all doctors realise their full potential,” said Andrew Stripp, Chief Executive of Monash Health.

“Monash Health has pledged that *No doctor will struggle in silence* and this agreement with RACS will help us make that a reality,” said Professor Erwin Loh, Chief Medical Officer of Monash Health.

beyondblue CEO Georgie Harman welcomed the agreement: “This is the kind of collaboration and sharing of practical information that will start to see a reduction in harmful behaviour directed towards the surgical workforce.”

“beyondblue is working closely with Monash Health in particular to improve doctors’ mental health and prevent suicide,” Ms Harman said.

This MoU commits both agencies into a shared vision to providing high quality training, education and experience in the practice of surgery. This commitment is underpinned by shared values of integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration and service.

Specific initiatives include:

- information sharing within the law about complaints involving discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- ensuring that complaints about discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment involving trainees, International Medical Graduates or College Fellows employed at Monash Health are managed fairly and expeditiously by RACS and/or by Monash Health
- ensuring that surgical supervisors have the necessary skills and attributes and are supported to provide training, assessment, feedback and support to Trainees and IMGs free of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- aligning or developing policies and processes to deal with these issues

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- sharing information and resources for training programs to address discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment and
- Monash Health will implement a formal process for appointing, credentialling and performance appraisal of surgical supervisors; and RACS will encourage its Fellows to comply with these

The MoU with Monash Health and RACS is the first in a series of partnerships the College is establishing with hospitals and other agencies in healthcare, who employ surgeons or oversee health systems.

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### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

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