

MEDIA RELEASE

RACS and Gold Coast Health sign MoU to improve respectful culture

Tues 4th October 2016

Gold Coast Health and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as a commitment to providing high quality training, education and experience in surgery and the health sector.

RACS President Philip Truskett said Gold Coast Health is a leading provider in the health sector and has a shared interest with RACS in dealing with issues of discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment (DBSH).

"We strongly supports Gold Coast Health's cultural change program based on the Vanderbilt Principles. Bullying is a real problem for our profession, like it is across the health sector and now is the time to build respect and improve patient safety," Mr Truskett said.

"Our hospital wards, operating theatres and outpatients are where surgical education and health service employment overlap so it makes sense for employers and educators to look for ways to improve the experience of Surgical Trainees and make hospitals a better place to work," the RACS President said.

Gold Coast Health Chief Executive Ron Calvert said he fully supported the College's Action Plan to promote respect, and counter these issues in the practice of surgery and improve patient safety.

"This MoU means that we have committed to working together to ensure that surgical supervisors have the necessary skills and attributes and are supported to provide training, assessment, feedback and support to Trainees and International Medical Graduates (IMGs), free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment."

"It also means that we will work cooperatively on these issues, and exchange information and take appropriate action where possible," Mr Calvert said.

RACS and Gold Coast Health have agreed to commit to a range of actions that include:

- collaborating on the development of programs and processes to deal with DBSH in the workplace, in surgery and in the health sector generally
- aligning or developing policies and processes to the extent possible to deal with these issues using the 'Vanderbilt Principles' as a foundation
- participating in joint activities to promote policies and processes to address DBSH.

Both organisations also agree to develop joint protocols in regard to complaints relating to DBSH and will confer with the other party to discuss, manage and resolve these complaints.

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Collaborating with employers to build respect in surgery is one of RACS' core commitments in its [Action Plan: *Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety*](#).

The Action Plan is the cornerstone of RACS' response to the recommendations of the 2015 Expert Advisory Group into DBSH in the practice of surgery.

In May 2016, RACS launched [Let's Operate With Respect](#) – a campaign to help deal effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery. RACS has also published a dedicated new section of its website, About Respect.

About 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 7,000 surgeons and 1,300 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

About Gold Coast Health

Gold Coast Health provides care in hospital and community settings across the expanding Gold Coast region. Services include all major adult specialties as well as paediatrics. Gold Coast Health is now training more medical students than any other hospital in Australia.

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