MEDIA RELEASE

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS RACS

Surgeons reaffirm support for new NT Liquor Licensing Act

16 August 2019

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has reaffirmed its support for the Northern Territory Government's new Liquor Licensing Act.

RACS NT Chair and head and neck surgeon, Mr Mahiban Thomas, congratulated the government for its commitment to the new legislation despite significant opposition from the alcohol industry.

"We commend the government for remaining steadfast in their commitment to this critical area of public policy, especially in the face of such vocal opposition from vested interests within the alcohol industry.

"The Riley Review, which was commissioned by the NT Government, highlighted just how unhealthy the drinking culture in the NT has become. The Review showed that we hold a long list of unenviable records, including the highest levels of both alcohol related hospitalisations and deaths in Australia. We were pleased by the comprehensive nature of the recommendations and the government's willingness to accept them," Mr Thomas said.

"As surgeons we see this first-hand, and we know just how devastating the consequences of alcohol related trauma can be. This is backed up by data from our own audits of surgical mortality, which consistently highlight hepatic (liver related) issues and alcohol misuse are much higher in the Northern Territory compared to similar audit reports in other jurisdictions.

RACS has a long track record on advocating for a minimum price on alcohol across Australia and supports evidence-based measures.

"It is imperative that practical evidence-based measures that benefit our community are supported, so that we can move towards a safer drinking culture in the Territory," Mr Thomas added.

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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 New Zealand and Australia. 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.

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