
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



Surgeon resignations could leave QLD hospital system ‘unworkable’

Monday 7 April 2014 – for immediate release

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has warned Premier Campbell Newman that the level of actual and impending resignations by surgeons across hospitals and specialty areas could leave the Queensland hospital system ‘unworkable’.

In an open letter from the College President, Associate Professor Michael Hollands FRACS to the Premier, the College urged the government to “find a resolution to prevent the loss of your absolutely key personnel in your hospitals and health department”.

The letter was written in light of the current situation regarding senior doctor contracts in Queensland. A copy of the letter was also sent to the Minister for Health, Lawrence Springborg and the Director General for Health, Ian Maynard.

The letter said the College needed to state its concerns “in the strongest terms”, that the situation in Queensland was “critical” and warning that the option of recruiting specialist surgeons from overseas was how Jayant Patel got into the system 10 years ago.

The Royal Australasian College Of Surgeons is responsible in Australia and New Zealand for the training and ongoing professional standards within the field of surgery.

The Letter said:

“The College has increasing concerns about the potentially devastating outcomes of the current specialist contract negotiations being undertaken in Queensland.

The health system relies on ready access to well-trained surgeons to not only provide the services for today’s community but also to ensure the training for the surgeons of the future.

This always needs to be supported by good will, trust and commitment towards the community, the hospital and also the health system itself. This is currently being destroyed within this industrial dispute.

The College is aware of actual and impending resignations of surgeons across many hospitals and across many specialty areas, in the Queensland public sector and the situation is critical. Such resignations will leave the Hospital system unworkable and training of surgeons perhaps impossible.

The College needs to state its concerns in the strongest terms.

Cont... p2

**Media inquiries: Brian Adams, Manager Media & Public Relations
04 290 289 33 or (03) 9249 1263**

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE



Surgeon resignations could leave QLD hospital system ‘unworkable’

From page 1.

“Specialist surgeons are highly skilled and require many years of very specific vocational training. This needs to be under the close supervision of experienced surgeons.

Recruiting specialist surgeons from overseas to fill service gaps is not easy, nor a speedy solution.

Standards differ, cultures differ and the surgical care required by the community is not always transferable. Queenslanders particularly have an extremely high profiled awareness of this. It is just over ten years since the appointment of Dr Jayant Patel to Bundaberg Hospital.

This was possible through the creation of shortages of surgical specialists within Queensland and inappropriate reviewing of standards by the regulators of the day.

Since then, it has taken many years for Queensland Health to restore its integrity and commitment to high quality surgical services, and to rebuild the trust of the public and the surgical profession.

It is irresponsible to suggest that the Queensland government will now disregard all of this.

Surgical services are vital to the function of any acute hospital service. They support the broadest range of services from emergency triage through to advanced cancer care and complex rehabilitative services.

It is vital to not only retain the current specialist surgeons but to build on their goodwill and commitment to train the surgeons of the future.

The College of Surgeons urges you to find a resolution to prevent the loss of your absolutely key personnel in your hospitals and health department.

Destroying their commitment, and trust thus forcing them to leave your health service will only be detrimental to the health services of the people of Queensland, and most likely take many years to recover.”

Ends:

**Media inquiries: Brian Adams, Manager Media & Public Relations
04 290 289 33 or (03) 9249 1263**