

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Expert Advisory Group on Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Terms of Reference</b>
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## 1. BACKGROUND

Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment have no place in the College or in any modern workplace.

It is insidious, unprofessional and can have a terrible adverse impact on people subjected to it. Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment demean individuals and prevent them from reaching their true potential. It is responsible for the loss of valuable talent from the profession.

The College will take a leadership role in dealing with these issues - both directly in relation to its own processes and operations, and indirectly where it can influence others in the workplace and the health sector generally. The College aspires to eliminating this conduct wherever the College has influence, as well as in all areas of the College's operations for Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates(IMG).

Regrettably, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment continue to occur within the community in general, and in hospitals and within the practice of surgery particularly. While this is a significant issue for employers and hospitals, the College has a clear role in seeking to protect and provide guidance and safeguards for all those affected.

This has been highlighted recently with questions raised as to how the College can improve the support and assistance provided to individual Fellows, Trainees and IMGs who are subjected to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. Importantly the College needs to more thoroughly understand and be involved with positively influencing the culture of hospitals and other healthcare workplaces across Australia and New Zealand to ensure that discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment is not tolerated and is eliminated into the future.

The College is therefore establishing an Expert Advisory Group (EAG). The EAG has a broad remit of assessing discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment at an individual, organisational and systems level as it relates to the College, its Fellows, trainees and IMGs, and other areas in which the College is involved or has influence. It will also consider how gender inequality impacts on these concerns. The EAG is charged with advising the College on its role, policies and processes and advocacy in relation to this important issue.

## 2. COMPOSITION

The EAG will be chaired by the Hon Rob Knowles AO, previous Minister of Health in Victoria and current Chair of the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

The Deputy Chair will be Dr Helen Szoke, who is currently CEO of Oxfam and previously the Australian Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner.

Other members of the EAG include:

Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia and Chair of Eastern Health Victoria.

Mr Ken Lay, APM, Previous Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria

Dame Judith Potter, DNZM, CBE , Previous High Court Judge

Mr Graeme Campbell, General Surgeon, Bendigo, Victoria, incoming College Vice President

Dr Cathy Ferguson, Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgeon, Wellington, New Zealand, incoming Chair of Professional Standards

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The advisory group is supported by both the senior staff of the College and externally appointed advisors.

### 3. KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The Expert Advisory Group considers that it needs to address the following issues and undertake the following activities:

1. Undertake appropriate surveys, literature and other review analysis to understand the prevalence of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery in Australia and New Zealand, the importance of organisational culture and gender inequality, and initiatives to positively address these.
2. Ensure the EAG and RACS have appropriate Stakeholder and Communication strategies to positively address and profile concerns being raised and the initiatives undertaken.
3. Review the current approach, support mechanisms, advocacy, policies and procedures of the College in relation to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment to ensure they are contemporary and appropriate. In particular, ensure the College has an appropriate complaints mechanism for discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment, as well as a support program that is broadly available to Fellows, trainees and IMGs.
4. Facilitate discussions with Health departments and hospitals as to how to positively impact the workplace environment and culture within healthcare.
5. Provide advice to the College on immediate, medium and long term requirements to address issues of gender inequality and undertake positive approaches to eliminate discrimination bullying and sexual harassment.
6. To provide advice on appropriate and relevant curriculum, training programs and professional development activities.
7. To review the communication strategy around discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment to ensure the message of support for Trainees and Fellows and IMGs is clearly delivered and understood.
8. To establish a reporting framework where progress can be measured of the improvements in dealing with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

### 4. TIMEFRAME

To meet as required over a three month period and provide report / presentation to College Council and other forums as required.

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