



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Victorian surgeons return to PANCH

**Wednesday 8 September, 2010**

Twelve years after the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital, or PANCH as it was known, closed its doors, Surgeons will return to the site to discuss numerous aspects of surgery, including ways in which trauma care can be most effectively delivered.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons will hold its Victorian Annual General Scientific & Fellowship Meeting (AGSFM) at Rydges Bell City, the site of the old PANCH, on September 10, 11 and 12.

A team of distinguished surgeons will make presentations over the three days, on issues ranging from surgical technique to the administrative and leadership roles demanded of modern surgeons.

Delegates will be addressed by the Victorian Health Minister, the Hon. Daniel Andrews, on Friday afternoon.

Delegates will also be reminded that 2010 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year since Victoria became the first jurisdiction in the world to mandate the wearing of seatbelts. The introduction of the legislation saw an immediate drop in the road toll, from 1061 in 1970 to 923 in 1971 – a 13 per cent reduction. Victoria's decision was followed by other Australian states within two years and has since been emulated around the world. International research shows that seatbelts reduce the risk of serious injury in a car accident by up to 50 per cent.

It is appropriate that the old PANCH site host this years meeting, as it was a PANCH based surgeon, Gordon Trinca who, appalled by the incidence of road trauma in the late sixties, helped establish the College's Road Trauma Committee and served as its chairman from 1971 to 1993.

The Committee has played a key role in other road safety initiatives, including the introduction of blood alcohol testing, the drug testing of drivers and the compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets. The Committee also celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The College's Victorian Regional Chair, Mr Ian Faragher, said this year's AGSFM promised to be particularly significant. "Like all annual meetings there will be an emphasis on the future of surgery, how we can improve the quality of surgical care by means of new techniques and more efficient systems."

"But this year, there will also be one eye on the past – the hugely important improvements made to trauma care over the past forty years," he said.

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