



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Western Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality releases 2011 Annual Report

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2011

The 2011 report of the Western Australian Audit of Surgical Mortality (WAASM), a quality assurance program aimed at the ongoing improvement of surgical care, was released today. This is the tenth year since WAASM was established.

Funded by the Western Australian Department of Health and managed by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, WAASM involves the clinical review of all cases where patients have died in a Western Australian hospital while under the care of a surgeon.

The number of Western Australian surgeons actively participating in the Audit has steadily increased since its inception in 2001, and currently 87 per cent of WA surgeons are participating in the Audit. In 2010 the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons made participation in audits of surgical mortality a compulsory requirement of recertification in its Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD). Equally, compliance with the College's CPD requirements is a condition of medical registration.

Principal findings in this year's annual report include:

- Preliminary indications suggest that there has been a progressive decline in the annual number of deaths between 2002, when WAASM was fully established, and 2010. This decrease has occurred despite a growing WA population. The number of deaths per 100,000 population has decreased from 35 to 26 (a fall of greater than 20 per cent).
- In February 2011, WAASM, in collaboration with the WA Department of Health, held an oversubscribed and very successful symposium on 'Recognising the Deteriorating Patient', a topic that is attracting intense international scrutiny. The symposium was so successful that it is now being replicated in other Australian states.

WAASM, like all audits of surgical mortality conducted by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, demonstrates an ongoing commitment to excellence on the part of its Fellows.

The WAASM Annual Report is available on the College's website: [www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org). Go to Research and Audit and click on Audits of Surgical Mortality (Western Australia), Reports and Publications.

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