Surgeons assess health policies during NSW election debate

Tuesday 17 March, 2015

Surgeons attended an election debate last night at the NSW regional office in Sydney, with the Minister for Health and Medical Research Jillian Skinner, the Shadow Minister for Health Walt Secord, and the Greens health spokesman John Kaye.

The debate allowed surgeons to advocate for timely access to high quality surgical services for all communities in NSW, ahead of this month’s state election.

NSW Regional Chair Dr Mary Langcake said key topics covered included increased surgical training opportunities to maintain a highly skilled surgical workforce, alcohol-related harm, timely and equitable access to surgery, and state/Commonwealth funding arrangements.

“Paediatric surgical services were also discussed in light of the current critical workload in the specialist children’s hospitals,” Dr Langcake said.

“In a display of bi-partisanship, all members of the panel indicated support for the appointment of more paediatric surgeons to ensure that children continue to have access to high quality services.

“The discussion around obesity and associated Type II Diabetes also led the panel to agree that it was vital all members of the public, regardless of socio-economic status, have access to bariatric surgical services when clinically indicated.”

Chair of the RACS Indigenous Surgery Committee Assoc. Prof Kelvin Kong asked for a commitment to address the ongoing disparity in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“Many of these health issues have a surgical basis, yet access to appropriate services falls well below accepted levels,” Dr Langcake said.

“We were encouraged by the fact all three members of the panel agreed to meet with Assoc. Prof Kong and College representatives to discuss these important issues.

“I thank the participants for taking the time to outline their policies because it has given us an important opportunity to discuss matters that affect delivery of surgical services.

“We hope that whoever is successful in winning Government will continue to use the expertise of clinicians so we can continue to provide excellent outcomes for all our patients.”

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ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

The debate was moderated by former Royal Australasian College of Surgeons President, Assoc. Prof Michael Hollands and structured around the NSW State Election Position Statement. Responses from the Government and the Greens are available at www.surgeons.org/media/college-advocacy/.

About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. 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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