Surgeons welcome release of consultation papers on review of Medicare rebate

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) welcomes the consultation papers released today by the Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce, saying that the Schedule is outdated and in need of review.

RACS Vice President Graeme Campbell says the College is concerned about the sustainability of healthcare into the future and that along with its specialty societies, RACS has already been working with the Government on particular item numbers.

"We are very happy to engage, we think it's important that the people who are involved in this review are clinicians who understand the billing system and actually use it," Mr Campbell said.

"We appreciate that the Government has listened to our advice about the importance of clinicians leading this review. The immediate past President of RACS Professor Michael Grigg is a member of the Taskforce, along with other well-respected and experienced clinicians.

"Previous reviews have shown that there are procedures that could be improved, and there is no doubt there are some 'hot' issues for patients which will need to be looked at.

"The review is timely and RACS would like to participate as much as possible. We would all benefit from having item numbers that reflect the operations that we do and the treatments that we give to patients, and the amount of money attached to each item should reflect the work that's done.

"In the end we hope that this review will result in a more sustainable health system, that is actually more transparent and allows clinicians to stand by the best available scientific evidence," Mr Campbell said.

ABOUT 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.