Surgeons launch their Reconciliation Action Plan

Wednesday 1 June, 2016

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has chosen National Reconciliation Week to launch its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) today in a show of commitment to reconciliation.

The launch will be hosted jointly by College President Philip Truskett and RACS Indigenous Health Committee Chair Dr David Murray, a Darug man from the Sydney area and one of only two Aboriginal surgeons in Australia.

Dr Murray said he was very excited to launch the College’s first Reconciliation Action Plan.

“The Plan focuses on building relationships and raising awareness and the development and implementation of this RAP is all about bringing staff, Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates (IMGs) together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Australian community to work towards reconciliation,” Dr Murray said.

RACS President Philip Truskett formally acknowledged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants, traditional owners and custodians of Australia on behalf of the College.

Mr Truskett spoke on the importance of reflection and the RAP’s role as a first step in RACS’ commitment to reconciliation and understanding between the College and Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“All surgeons have been challenged over the past twelve months by the concerns around, bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment.

“The College has taken a frank and direct approach in investigating, acknowledging and adopting a series of recommendations to face these challenges within our profession”

“This Reconciliation Action Plan is a further commitment by our organisation to drive change within the culture of surgery, to acknowledge the past and make a commitment to the future of reconciliation within our country,” Mr Truskett said.

2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the 10th anniversary of the Reconciliation Action Plan program.

The RACS Indigenous Health Committee and RACS executive led the development of the RAP in collaboration with Reconciliation Australia and RACS staff.

The RAP will assist RACS to contribute towards reconciliation through developing relationships, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reconciliation Australia has advised over 650 organisations across Australia have generated close to 4,000 partnerships as a result of participation in the Reconciliation Action Plan program.

Development of the Plan was a key initiative of the RACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Action Plan, 2014-2016 which has also led to:

• Annual sponsorship and participation in Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association conferences.

• Inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues in the scientific program of the RACS Annual Scientific Congress (ASC).

• Scholarships for final year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students and junior doctors to attend the RACS ASC.

• Rewarding excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health with a RACS medal.

• Development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander motif.
• Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country protocols for RACS events.

Further information about RACS commitment to Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health is available from: https://www.surgeons.org/member-services/interest-groups-sections/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/

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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