MEDIA RELEASE

RACS promotes respect in revised Code of Conduct

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has revised its Code of Conduct to promote respect in surgery, through high standards of surgical performance and clear expectations of professionalism.

The Code defines professional behaviour for surgeons and reflects the values – of service, integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration – and the College Pledge that all new Fellows make.

It requires surgeons to demonstrate objectivity and compassion, place patients’ interests first and always respect a patient’s dignity and autonomy.

The RACS Code aligns with the expectations of medical regulators in Australia and New Zealand and complements the more specific codes for each surgical specialty developed by each Specialty Society.

“There is no room for discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment in our profession and we have revised our Code of Conduct to make our expectations very clear,” said RACS President, Mr Philip Truskett AM.

RACS reviewed the Code in consultation with the surgical specialty societies and associations, and relevant RACS Committees and Boards.

“The consultation process strengthened the Code and assured individual surgeons that it reflected the standards expected of them by their peers,” Mr Truskett said.

The revised RACS Code of Conduct defines professional conduct, makes clear that all Fellows are accountable for their conduct in the workplace, and re-affirms RACS commitment to ensuring an inclusive surgical culture in Australia and New Zealand.

Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment are specifically identified as breaches of the Code.

“The Code is binding on all Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates and we expect everyone involved in the College to operate with respect,” Mr Truskett said.

Fellows found to have breached the Code may be subject to sanctions, including loss of privileges and in the most serious proven cases, loss of College Fellowship.

RACS is sending a hard copy of the revised Code to each of its 7,000 Fellows, 1300 Trainees and International Medical Graduates in Australia and New Zealand and has published the revised Code online.

Revising the Code is part of RACS’ Action Plan: Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety, which details the work the College is doing in education, complaints management and culture and leadership.

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As part of the Action Plan, RACS has also reviewed its Sanctions Policy.


In May 2016, RACS launched Let's Operate With Respect - a campaign to help deal effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery. RACS has also published a dedicated new section of its website – About respect.

Ends.

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.

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