

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



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COSMETIC SURGERY CONSULTATION TO START IN VICTORIA

All Australians will be invited to take part in a national consultation on the use of the title “surgeon” by medical practitioners, with Victoria leading the way.

The consultation will ask for feedback following concerns that the title “surgeon” and “cosmetic surgeon” by medical practitioners – whether by specialist surgeons or other practitioners without specialist training – can cause confusion and lead to bad outcomes for patients.

Currently medical practitioners in Australia can use the title “surgeon” in their practice regardless of whether they have obtained entry-level surgical training or advanced accredited surgical qualifications. This is because the law which regulates use of professional titles does not protect the title “surgeon” as a stand-alone title.

A Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) has been developed to ask for responses from the public on this issue and will run from mid-December until 1 April 2021.

Victoria, with the support of all Health Ministers is proposing four main reform options for consideration:

- Restricting the title “surgeon” under National Law, with feedback sought on who’d be eligible to use it.
- Strengthening the existing framework, through administrative rather than legislative mechanisms.
- Undertaking major public info campaigns and/or increasing provider liability for non-economic damages.
- Maintaining status quo and existing regulatory and other tools.

All members of the public are invited to anonymously provide feedback about their experiences and submissions can be made directly to the Department of Health by professional organisations and individual practitioners. A number of information sessions for professional organisations will also be held.

The information provided in the anonymous survey and direct submissions will be used to determine the most effective policy responses to address issues raised in the Consultation phase.

The proposed policy response will be outlined in a Decision RIS released to the public. The Decision RIS will explain the preferred implementation option and discuss potential impacts on the public and the medical profession.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

“The serious harm that has been exposed recently in the cosmetic surgery industry is unacceptable and we want to work with other jurisdictions to make sure it cannot continue to occur.”

“Health Ministers are concerned that many Australians may believe that all medical practitioners who use the title ‘surgeon’ have obtained comparable and necessary training and qualifications, when it’s sometimes not the case.”

“We need as many people as possible to provide feedback, so that all Australians can have confidence that when they visit a surgeon, they’ll get the best possible results.”