



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the
Public Service and Cabinet

Ref No: MC19-018979

Dr Naveen Somia
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Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons
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27 NOV 2019

Dear Dr Somia

I refer to your letter of 12 November 2019 concerning the use of the term 'cosmetic surgeon' by those not recognised by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as a specialist in the field of surgery.

I acknowledge your concerns regarding media outlets calling upon medical practitioners who are not recognised as specialists by AHPRA.

In Australia, any medical practitioner with a basic medical degree can perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures. Cosmetic surgery is not a recognised medical specialty under the national registration arrangements. Rather, it is a field of practice in which any medical practitioner may practice. I note consumers are often not aware that health practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery have widely varying levels of qualifications, training and expertise.

At the November 2019 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council meeting, my state and territory colleagues and I approved changes to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law) to restrict the use of the title 'surgeon'. It was agreed the use of the title 'surgeon' by medical practitioners, non-specialists surgeons or those without other appropriate specific training can cause confusion among members of the public.

I note that further work will be required prior to the changes being made to the National Law to determine which medical practitioners should be given the right to use the title 'surgeon'. This will include consultation with community consumer groups and medical professions.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt