

# Media Release

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## Victorian Government Warns Patients of Underground Cosmetic Surgery Clinics

The [Herald-Sun](#) has reported that the booming numbers of dodgy underground cosmetic quacks have prompted the Victorian State Government to [take to social media to warn](#) patients of the dangers when seeking out cosmetic surgery.

The social media video campaign warns that procedures such as liposuction, breast augmentation or tummy tucks cannot be performed in unregistered settings, proving questions to ensure the treatment is safe and ways to report those which are not.

It's a move that has been welcomed by the Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ASAPS).

"This is a big, bold step in the right direction, and we applaud the Victorian Health Minister for this strategy. Educating consumers and patients is mandatory in 2019 when 'fake news' is everywhere due to medical practitioners indulging in false and misleading advertising.

"A well-educated patient will be able to determine who is a legitimate surgeon and who is not. Doctors who fail to play by the rules flout the law and pose the greatest risk to patient safety", ASAPS President, Dr Naveen Somia said.

There are four areas ASAPS is of the view that breach the law and put patient safety at risk:

1. False and misleading advertising on social media in defiance of the National Law.
2. Withhold the truth from patients by misrepresenting the qualifications and expertise of the doctors by using a non-AHPRA title in defiance of the National Law.
3. Use counterfeit or unlicensed products that do not meet the safety standards of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).
4. Operate in unlicensed facilities that do not meet Australian Standards for safety and hygiene.

Dr Somia also acknowledged the vital work of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in encouraging the reporting of unregistered operators, undertaking illegal cosmetic injectable procedures using non-TGA approved counterfeit and dangerous products in Australia.

People can notify the TGA anonymously about the use of counterfeit medicines or illegal devices by emailing [ECT@health.gov.au](mailto:ECT@health.gov.au) or by calling 1800 020 653, or [unlawful practices can be reported online](#).

The ASAPS has three features on its website to further educate patients to empower their choice in cosmetic surgery:

1. A [cosmetic surgery blog](#) that is written by leading experts in cosmetic surgery.
2. [Ask ASAPS](#) is a Q and A feature where patients can ask questions about cosmetic surgery.
3. A [membership directory](#) of over 300 AHPRA registered Specialist Plastic Surgeons who use TGA approved products and operate in licensed facilities.

The Herald-Sun cited one in four [Health Complaints Commissioner investigations](#) are related to cosmetic procedures.

Victorian Health Minister Jenny Mikakos urged patients to check clinics are registered to avoid the risk of disfigurement, infection and potentially deadly complications. Ms Mikakos warned aggressive new trends and cheap deals were targeting vulnerable customers with unlicensed facilities, low-cost imitation and online influencers emerging on the market.

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"We're taking action to drive down avoidable harm and prevent patients from suffering significant financial loss.

"Cosmetic surgery is more popular than ever, but if proper safety measures aren't followed, it can be perilous. That's why we're ensuring patients are aware of the risks and receive the highest standards of care."

"We want to stop Victorians being lured into 'cheap deals' on cosmetic surgery and liposuction, which in some cases can leave them with permanent damage, disfigurement and severe trauma," Ms Mikakos said.

**Ends**

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**Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons** has been one of the peak bodies for cosmetic surgery in Australia and New Zealand for 40 years. We are committed to making sure you receive the best advice, find an appropriately qualified aesthetic plastic surgeon and experience world-class treatment before, during and after your surgery.