

# Doctors face off in regulation fight between cosmetic and plastic surgeons

RHIANNON DOWN

Australia's peak body for cosmetic surgeons has accused the nation's plastic surgeons of acting as a "cartel" by seeking to gain an industry monopoly, calling on health authorities to develop a national accreditation standard for the field.

Numerous high profile and horrific cases of medical practitioners masquerading as cosmetic surgeons leaving patients to deal with the fallout from botched surgeries has prompted plastic surgery groups to propose new restrictions on the use of misleading specialist titles.

In response, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) has released its own proposal to reform the industry, arguing that the way to put a stop to rogue, unskilled operators was to develop a "competency based" accredited industry standard to provide "better and safer outcomes" for patients.

ACCS president Dr Patrick Tansley said the fact that the term cosmetic surgeons was not recognised as a speciality by the Australian Medical Council, creating "confusion among patients", was better remedied by creating a standard for the profession.

"What I am calling for is an objective benchmark that protects patients should be put in place until we have called on the Australian federal and state governments to provide an accreditation process so they know their surgeon is qualified in cosmetic surgery," he said.

Dr Tansley said members of his organisation had up to 12 years of surgical training behind them to carry out cosmetic procedures, accusing plastic surgeons of seeking to protect their own "\$2m income club".

"This is the worst type of cartel behaviour that puts their own incomes ahead of the safety of patients," he said.

Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ASAPS) president Dr Robert Sheen said the proposed regulation of the term cosmetic surgeon was about protecting patients, accusing practitioners of "masquerading as specialists" and using a "fabricated title".