Media Release

Epworth HealthCare signs RACS Respect Agreement

27 September 2017

Epworth HealthCare today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) aimed at building respect and improving patient safety in surgery.

The MoU collaboration under the RACS 2015 Action Plan: Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety, represents a shared commitment by the organisations to address discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery and the health sector.

Dr Cathy Ferguson, Vice President of RACS said that it was vital that medical colleges and hospitals worked together to create safe training and work environments, free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

"In the past, bullying has been a real problem in surgery and in the heath sector as a whole. It is essential, not only for the well-being of our entire workforce but for the well-being of our patients too, that we work together to build a culture of respect where all healthcare professionals can realise their full potential free from discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment."

Epworth HealthCare Group Chief Executive, Dr Lachlan Henderson, said the Board, hospital administration and staff are committed to providing a safe and supportive workplace.

"We're pleased to partner with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons on this important issue," Dr Henderson said.

"Epworth HealthCare prides itself as an Employer of Choice with a diverse culture and work policies that support justice and equity at all levels.

"We know that staff welfare and quality patient care go hand-in-hand. Providing a safe and supportive workplace not only benefits our staff, but also improves patient outcomes,"

Specific initiatives in the MoU signed between Epworth HealthCare and RACS include:

- Sharing information and resources between the two organisations for education and training.
- Supporting greater diversity within the surgical profession.
- Working together to ensure that surgeons and trainees are able to undertake training and education in relation to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.
- Sharing information about on how complaints relating to unacceptable behaviour are managed.

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 is committed to working with health networks to implement system-wide changes that support cultural change within the workforce.

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About RACS

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in New Zealand and Australia. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7,000 surgeons and 1,300 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.

www.surgeons.org

About Epworth HealthCare

Epworth is Victoria's largest not-for-profit private health care group with hospitals in several locations in across Melbourne and in Victoria. During the last decade we have expanded our patient and staff numbers and offered more medical treatment and care than we have in the 97 years that we have existed. We are now educating the next generation of health professionals through our medical, nursing and allied health education and training programs. By partnering with key universities and TAFEs across Victoria, we are able to deliver engaging programs supported by senior specialist clinicians and clinical educators from across the group.