

# ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS



PATRON: H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES

11 February 2015

Mr Simon O'Connor  
Chair  
Health Select Committee  
c/- Committee Secretariat, Health  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

(Via online submission system)

Dear Mr O'Connor

## **Health (Protection) Amendment Bill 2014, Part 2: Artificial UV tanning services**

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (the College) 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 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. The College also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. It represents nine surgical specialties in New Zealand and Australia being: Cardiothoracic Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery.

As part of its commitment to standards and professionalism, the College strives to take informed and principled positions on issues related to surgical care in New Zealand. The high prevalence of skin cancers such as melanoma is one such issue. Surgeons across this country have to care for patients with melanoma regularly and know their devastating effects all too well.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons wishes to indicate its firm support for the measures proposed in Part 2 of the Health (Protection) Amendment Bill 2014. New Zealand sadly has the highest reported melanoma incidence rate of any country. On average, 325 New Zealanders will die from melanoma every year, making it the sixth most common cause of death by cancer in this country.

These unfortunate statistics are in no way helped by the availability of tanning booths and sunbeds. The World Health Organisation estimates that sunbed use before the age of 35 increases the risk of melanoma by 75%. The Bill's proposed prohibition on artificial UV tanning services to persons under 18 represents a positive step forward in preventing the melanomas that are so prevalent in New Zealand.

Should you require any further comment or assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Willis FRACS  
Chair, New Zealand National Board

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*College of Surgeons of Australia and New Zealand*

New Zealand Headquarters: Level 4, 97-99 Courtenay Place, Wellington. Postal Address: PO Box 7451 Newtown, Wellington 6242.

Tollfree (NZ only): 0800 787 469 / 0800 SURGNZ Telephone 64-4-385 8247 Facsimile 64-4-385 8873

Email [College.NZ@surgeons.org](mailto:College.NZ@surgeons.org) Website [www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)