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## **John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship awarded for the treatment of obesity in the public health system**

**28 August 2017**

Professor Wendy Brown, Chair of the Monash University Department of Surgery at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne has just been awarded the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship valued at \$150,000. Professor Brown, a General Surgeon specialising in oesophago-gastric cancer, gastroesophageal reflux disease and bariatric surgery, is the first woman to have been awarded the honour in a long list of awardees dating back to 1977 when the Fellowship was first established.

The John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship, RACS' most prestigious award, was established in 1978 by Mrs Elisabeth Unsworth in honour of her son, John Mitchell Crouch, a promising Neurosurgeon, who died from a brain tumour in 1977 at age 36, in order to contribute to the understanding and practice of surgery and anaesthesia, in keeping with the skills and promise demonstrated by Dr Crouch.

Applicants must be Fellows of the College who are in their first 15 years of their Fellowship, are working actively in their field and can demonstrate that they have an outstanding body of work that has already made an impact on the progress of surgery or has contributed significantly to fundamental scientific research.

Professor Brown, whose body of work is centred on optimising the treatment of obesity in the public health system, said that the John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship will enable her to continue her research to determine whether a fast-tracked, intensive obesity intervention in patients consuming high amounts of health care resources can result in significant reductions in hospital bed days and total health care costs while improving health and quality of life.

"Obesity now affects 28% of Australians and 33% of New Zealanders, making it our most prevalent disease.

"My studies will measure the cost effectiveness of weight loss through bariatric surgery in a population of patients who are obese and have various health challenges, and the potential to streamline care for patients following bariatric surgery so that there is less requirement for face-to-face clinic care," she said.

Professor Brown will attend the convocation ceremony at the 2018 Annual Scientific Congress in Sydney where the Fellowship will officially be awarded, and where she will make an oral presentation on her extensive body of work.

### **About RACS**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. 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.

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