



MEDIA RELEASE

Surgeons applaud launch of Indigenous Report Card on ear disease

29 November 2017

RACS applauds the launch of the AMA Indigenous Report Card which focuses attention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ear disease and its impact on Closing the Gap efforts.

RACS supports the need for a nationally consistent approach to monitoring and addressing unacceptably high rates of ear disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the formation of a national taskforce to combat the ear health crisis.

“The continuing prevalence of ear disease and hearing loss in Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander populations is a clear barrier to closing the gap priorities. Reports such as the AMA Indigenous Report Card on ear disease are important in highlighting this issue. We ask governments to act quickly to embed hearing health in their priorities and include nationally agreed benchmarks around best practice and service delivery,” said RACS President John Batten.

RACS, the Australian Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery (ASOHNS) and key medical, research and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peak bodies have been working together under the banner #EarHealthForLife to advocate for a national approach to improving ear health.

Associate Professor Kelvin Kong, the Chair of ASOHNS Aboriginal Health Subcommittee and member of the RACS Indigenous Health Committee said that hearing health is a critical part of primary healthcare.

“It is alarming that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have deplorable rates of middle ear infection and its complications. Chronic otitis media (middle ear infections) should not be a normal part of childhood yet we are seeing extraordinarily high rates of hearing loss from this condition. If children can’t hear, they miss on their learning and development and this impacts negatively on their participation in life,” he added.

Download the [2017 AMA Report Card on Indigenous Health](#)

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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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