



LET'S OPERATE WITH RESPECT



MEDIA RELEASE

Austin Health and RACS sign Respect Agreement

26 March 2018

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

The 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 David Love, Chair of the RACS Victorian Committee 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 health sector as a whole. It is essential, not only for the wellbeing of our entire workforce but for the wellbeing 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.”

Austin Health Board Chair The Hon Judith Troeth AM said the health service’s Board, Executive and staff are committed to providing a safe and supportive workplace.

“We’re pleased to partner with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons to work towards our shared goal of a workplace free of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment,” Ms Troeth said.

“Austin Health is firmly committed to providing a safe and supportive working environment for our people, who dedicate so much of their lives to help others.”

Austin Health Chief Medical Officer Dr Fergus Kerr said staff welfare and quality patient care go hand-in-hand.

“We know that providing a safe and supportive workplace not only benefits our staff, but also improves patient outcomes,” Dr Kerr said.

Specific initiatives in the agreement signed between Austin Health and RACS include:

- Working together on standards for accreditation of training posts in hospitals
- Supporting greater diversity within the surgical profession
- Working towards sharing information about complaints relating to unacceptable behaviour
- Collaborating on the development of programs and processes to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

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.

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.
www.surgeons.org

About Austin Health

Austin Health is one of Victoria's largest health care providers and employs in excess of 8,000 staff across its sites and services; including over 1,000 Doctors and 3,000 nurses, and delivers a full range of leading edge clinical services, including several state-wide services (liver transplant, spinal cord injury service, respiratory support service, child inpatient mental health service). Austin Health's vision is to change healthcare for the better through world-class research, education and exceptional patient care.
<http://www.austin.org.au/>

Media inquiries:

Abderazzaq Noor, RACS
t: +61 3 9249 1263
m: +61 429 028 933

Andrew Williamson, Austin Health
t: +61 3 9496 6691
m: +61 409 422 048