



ANZCA
FPM

Media
statement

Statement from ANZCA President Dr Vanessa Beavis

10 December 2021

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is dismayed and appalled that any practitioner who is caring for an unconscious patient behaves in the disrespectful and unprofessional manner shown in the recent joint investigation “Cosmetic Cowboys” by *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and Four Corners.

ANZCA is the leading authority on sedation, anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine and is responsible for training, assessing, and setting standards for all specialist anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians wishing to practice in Australia and New Zealand.

Fellowship of ANZCA as a specialist anaesthetist is only available to doctors who have met our rigorous training requirements over a minimum of five years, and actively participate in life-long learning through our continuing professional development program.

The college has been working to enhance patient safety and care in day procedure centres for many years and welcomes the recent review announced by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the Medical Board of Australia into patient safety issues in the cosmetic sector. We have offered to provide expert advice on how to strengthen risk-based regulation of practitioners, including those administering anaesthetics, in the area.

Recent media reports on the cosmetic surgery industry highlighting the practices of an “anaesthetist” in a Sydney day surgery hospital are extremely concerning and do not reflect the safe clinical standards practised by the specialist anaesthetists who are fellows of ANZCA (FANZCA). We are very proud of the ‘badge of quality’ that a FANZCA confers, which is recognised all over the world. Specialist anaesthetists who successfully complete the ANZCA training program are admitted as fellows of ANZCA and are entitled to use the post-nominal “FANZCA”.

“Anaesthetist” is not a protected medical title unlike “specialist anaesthetist”. In Australia and New Zealand, only medical practitioners who have completed the required minimum five years of supervised ANZCA training (or equivalent) following two years in-hospital training and a general medical degree can call themselves a “specialist anaesthetist.”

Specialist anaesthetists provide the highest level of expertise in delivering safe and high quality patient care but we recognise that this is not always possible in rural and remote areas due to resourcing and scarcity of specialist staff. ANZCA is working with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College for Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) on developing and enhancing formal qualifications for GPs that enable those doctors to administer anaesthesia for some lower-risk elective and emergency procedures - and the resuscitation and stabilisation of patients for transfer to bigger hospitals when required.

ANZCA is also leading a review with 26 other health practitioner stakeholder groups on our safe sedation guidelines for a range of practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. Medical facilities are responsible for ensuring their medical staff are treating patients within their scope of practice but

we also urge anyone considering a medical procedure that involves sedation or anaesthesia to check the qualifications of the medical practitioners.