



# Fact Sheet

Consultation Regulation Impact Statement: Use of the title 'surgeon' by medical practitioners

**OFFICIAL**

## Background and current framework

Medical practitioners in Australia, registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme), may currently use the title 'surgeon' in their practice regardless of whether they have obtained entry-level surgical training or advanced surgical qualifications. This is because the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law), which regulates use of professional titles by all registered health practitioners in Australia, does not protect the title 'surgeon' as a stand-alone title.

Health ministers are concerned this may be confusing for the public, as the public likely believe that all medical practitioners who use the title 'surgeon' have obtained comparable training and qualifications. This may contribute to instances of harm, particularly where members of the public access cosmetic surgical procedures from providers who practise outside their scope or skillset when using the title 'surgeon', including by way of 'cosmetic surgeon', leading to adverse patient outcomes.

## Consultation Regulation Impact Statement

The Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) is a document which proposes various policy and legislative options to address potential issues identified with the current regulatory framework enabling medical practitioners to use the title 'surgeon'. This document will allow stakeholders, including members of the public, to review these issues and how they may be impacting the public and the health sector and provide feedback on proposed ways to address them.

This consultation process will also support stakeholders to identify any further risks, issues or impacts that should be considered by health ministers when determining next steps following consultation.

## The consultation process

The consultation will run for approximately three and a half months until 1 April 2022 and is open to all professional stakeholders and members of the public. This will ensure that a diverse and comprehensive



range of responses are received, and that the public safe, workforce and market impacts of possible reforms to the regulatory framework are identified.

The consultation process seeks to identify the most effective policy and/or legislative option/s to address the issues raised in the Consultation RIS, including those options which have the highest net benefit. This will assist health ministers in determining the best way forward.

The Consultation RIS will be available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/medical-practitioners-use-title-surgeon-under-national-law> from Monday 13 December 2021. All stakeholder responses must be submitted by Friday 1 April 2022.

## Members of the public

An expert health consumer organisation has been engaged to survey members of the public about their experiences, reflecting the fact that sharing those stories is a very personal process. Responses to the Consultation RIS from members of the public can be made through the consumer specific survey hosted by the Health Issues Centre, which will ensure this process is handled sensitively and privacy is maintained for all respondents.

This survey will collect similar information requested in the Consultation RIS, as well as additional demographic information. All information provided by members of the public will remain de-identified.

The consumer specific survey will open from Tuesday 21 December 2021 and can be found at: <https://cosmeticsurgeryaus.questionpro.com.au>.

The survey will close at 5:00 pm on Friday 1 April 2022.

All respondents should read and consider the relevant data collection notice for consumers before completing the survey and providing their submission.

## Workforce organisations and individual practitioners

A response template specifically for organisations and individual health practitioners will be available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/medical-practitioners-use-title-surgeon-under-national-law> from Tuesday 21 December 2021. Responses from workforce organisations and individual practitioners must be submitted to [NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au) by 5:00 pm Friday 1 April 2022.

All respondents should read and consider the relevant data collection notice for workforce entities before providing a submission to the consultation inbox.

## Virtual Information Sessions

In addition, the NRAS Review Implementation Project Team will be running a number of virtual information sessions for interested stakeholders. Information about these sessions will be provided to stakeholders during the consultation period through various forums. Further, stakeholders may also notify their interest by emailing [NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au).

## Next steps

Following the consultation process, health ministers will consider the feedback provided by participants. Information gathered through this process will inform the development of a Decision RIS which will be released to the public advising of health ministers' actions to address the issues raised throughout the Consultation RIS process.

## Further information

For any queries regarding the consultation process, contact the NRAS Review Implementation Project Team at [NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au).

To receive this document in another format, phone (03) 9500 4392, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email the NRAS Review Implementation Project Team, <NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au>](mailto:NRAS.Consultation@health.vic.gov.au).

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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ISBN 978-1-76096-695-9 (online/PDF/Word)

Available at [Medical practitioners' use of the title surgeon under the National Law, Engage Victoria](https://engage.vic.gov.au/medical-practitioners-use-title-surgeon-under-national-law)  
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