



MEDIA STATEMENT

The following is a statement on behalf of the Australasian College of Podiatric Surgeons (ACPS)

Whilst it is acknowledged that all surgeries carry inherent risks, it's important to address concerns surrounding the safety of podiatric surgery with a balanced perspective. Some critics, particularly from the orthopaedic surgery field, have raised questions about the safety of podiatric surgery. However, it's crucial to approach these discussions with honesty and transparency.

Available data consistently indicates that podiatric surgery is generally safe and effective, with patients experiencing minimal post-operative issues. We are concerned that some orthopaedic surgeons, as well as the Australian Orthopaedic Association, may be intentionally seeking to discredit podiatric surgery and spreading misinformation. This does nothing to serve patient outcomes. We strongly believe it is essential to foster a constructive, evidence-based dialogue. The evidence around podiatric surgery is clear and unambiguous.

- In 2022, over 3,000 Australians underwent podiatric surgery, with a reported 97.4% experiencing no complications in the first 30 days.
- The College maintains a 100% compliance with clinical audit participation, a statistic comparable to vascular and breast cancer surgeons.
- Additionally, a national quantitative audit covering 20,000 admissions from 2012 to 2022 reported a remarkably low hospital readmission rate of 0.3%.

These figures challenge assertions that podiatric surgery is inherently unsafe. Any assertion to the contrary is not just wrong based on the data, but with respect, medically dishonest.

Podiatric surgeons undergo years of specialist training and are registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Registered podiatric surgeons have been appropriately using the title "Podiatric surgeon" since it was approved by the Ministerial Council under the National Law in 2010. Both podiatric and orthopaedic surgeons contribute significantly to patient care. We remain committed to an open discussion that values the positive impact of both areas of surgical expertise, relying on data and evidence rather than the politics of outside agendas.

All surgical colleges and cohorts must, from time to time, deal with circumstances in which patients are unsatisfied with outcomes. This is part and parcel of the profession and has nothing to do with what title a person may carry. There are strict processes to follow in such circumstances, and our College adheres to these processes.

The ACPS will not comment on historical matters or individual cases, nor interrogate them through the media. We focus instead on the well-established and credentialed standing of our cohort. We are actively participating in the current board review and look forward to the recommendations particularly in the context of AHPRA regulations.

4 December 2023