

Cosmetic Reforms July 2023

Reading time:

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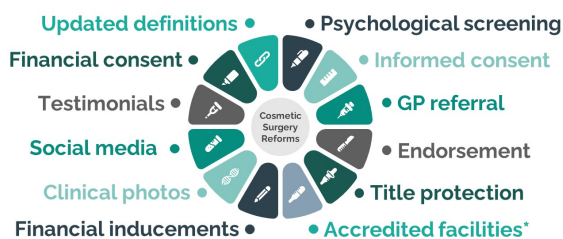
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From 1 July 2023, there will be significant changes to the regulation of cosmetic surgery in Australia. These changes will have an impact not only on surgeons and practitioners conducting cosmetic surgeries and non-surgical procedures but also on GPs and dentists. These reforms are a direct outcome of the final report from the Independent Review of the Regulation of Medical Practitioners who Perform Cosmetic Surgery. The report, commissioned by Ahpra and released on 1 September 2022, recommended the establishment of clear standards for the approach to and advertising of cosmetic surgery and procedures, along with increased transparency regarding the qualifications and expertise of medical practitioners involved in cosmetic surgery.

What are the key changes?



*The requirement that all cosmetic surgery be performed in accredited facilities has been withdrawn.

The reforms will focus on four key areas:

1. Cosmetic surgery standards
2. Advertising guidelines
3. Registration standard for cosmetic surgery endorsement
4. Amendments to the National Law

1. Cosmetic surgery standards

The Medical Board of Australia has created new and updated **Cosmetic Surgery standards**. These Standards set out the rules around the performance of cosmetic surgery and procedures, as well as the assessment, examination, and consent of patients. In particular, the Standards now require:

- a GP referral for all cosmetic surgery;
- more thorough screening and psychological evaluation of patients prior to surgery;
- clarity around informed consent (including the need for cooling off periods);
- those non-disclosure agreements not be used.

2. Advertising guidelines

Tougher **Advertising Guidelines** now ban the use of testimonials, social media influencers, before-and-after images, sexualised images, hashtags, emojis, and non-clinical terms such as “mummy tummy”, “tummy tuck”, “Brazilian butt lift”, or “designer vagina”. In addition, the guidelines now require specific consent to be obtained from patients before using their images in any advertising, and the inclusion of information about the practitioner’s registration and whether or not they have an endorsement.

Ahpra has indicated that it will commence auditing websites for compliance against the Advertising guidelines from 3 July 2023.

3. Registration standard for cosmetic surgery endorsement

A new **Registration Standard for Cosmetic Surgery Endorsement** has also been created. This will allow practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery to obtain an AMC-accredited qualification in cosmetic surgery. Although the new endorsement registration standard commences on 1 July 2023, there are currently no approved qualifications available. It is unclear when or if any qualifications will be available in the future. Furthermore, practitioners will be allowed to continue performing cosmetic surgery even if they choose not to obtain a qualification that leads to an endorsement in cosmetic surgery.

4. Amendments to the National Law

Amendments to the National Law are expected later this year which will restrict the use of the title “surgeon” to medical practitioners who hold specialist registration in surgery, ophthalmology, or obstetrics and gynaecology.

Where can I find out more?

The Medical Board of Australia has developed a dedicated **cosmetic surgery hub**, which includes links to the new and updated guidelines, a **summary of key reforms, FAQ’s and factsheets**.

Finally, the upcoming MIPS webinar scheduled for August will explore the recent cosmetic surgery reforms, with a specific emphasis on their implications for General Practitioners. We encourage you to register via the email invitation closer to the time.
