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20 November 2017

Mr Aaron Patrick
Deputy Editor
Australian Financial Review
1 Darling Island Road
Pyrmont, NSW, 2009

Email to: apatrick@fairfaxmedia.com.au

Dear Mr Patrick

On behalf of the Australian Orthopaedic Association, the peak professional organisation for orthopaedic surgery in Australia, we would like to thank you for covering and bringing to light the complex issues involved in arthroscopic knee surgery for the tens of thousands of Australians who suffer from degenerative knee disease in your article, "The Battle of Wounded Knees." AFR 18–19 November 2017.

Given the increasingly high disease burden of knee osteoarthritis in Australia this issue is extremely important. The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) and the Australian Knee Society believe that ongoing evidence-based and reasoned discussion is vital. We are fully committed to continued discussions with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the NSW Bureau of Health Information in this regard.

However, following the publication of your article, members have raised concerns about the way AOA has been represented, specifically referencing the fourth paragraph:

"Orthopedic surgeons, who regulate themselves, can ignore medical research. The official guidelines from the knee-focused division of the Australian Orthopedic Association, which operates as a union, a licensing agency and professional regulator, give surgeons a high degree of latitude to decide when arthroscopy is appropriate."

AOA is not a union, licensing agency or a regulator. AOA delivers medical training, education and continuous professional development on behalf of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, which is accredited by the Australian Medical Council.

Our 1,700 members do not regulate themselves or ignore medical research. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APHRA) regulates our members. Any member who fails to undertake best practice can have their accreditation removed by APHRA. Our members undergo rigorous fellowship training to be accredited by APHRA as specialist orthopaedic surgeons and undergo mandatory, annually-updated continuous professional development activities.



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Our members have demonstrated highly valuable adoption of evidence-based medical research, informed by the AOA National Joint Replacement Registry and resulting in benefits to the Australian community of over \$600m, as reported by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC).

To alleviate member concern, this letter will be available on our website and promoted through relevant communication channels.

Further information about the AOA, its constitution and governance, can be found at www.aoa.org.au/about-aoa

Yours sincerely,

Lawrie Malisano
President