

Policy

Subject: **Role of the College regarding social issues**
Approval Date: November 2017
Review Date: November 2021
Review By: Board of Directors
Number: 4/2017

A “social issue” is an issue within society that affects a considerable number of individuals, often involving multiple factors ranging from poverty, discrimination, marginalisation, environmental factors, historical injustices, immigration etc. There is often conflicting opinion within society as to how much certain issues are personal rather than social and which social issues require solutions and in what priority. There are also frequently political, economic, moral or religious aspects to these conflicts. It is the view of the College Board that it is not within the defined purpose and mission of the College to make comments or statements on behalf of its members regarding issues where there is an array of political, moral and religious opinions and complex underlying social factors, given the diversity of our membership and lack of research and expertise within the College in these fields.

An exception would be an issue where there is evidence of a relationship with health in general and pathology in particular. The College may provide an expert statement relating to such an issue. Occasionally there are issues that are health-related but outside the purview of the College and while it may not be appropriate for the College to comment due to lack of expertise in the field, it will be appropriate for other peak health organisations and Colleges to give expert opinion. When such social issues arise in the public arena from time-to-time, the Board will consider them using the above criteria before making a decision as to whether or not to comment on behalf of members.