



COLLABORTIVE CARE *Professor Nitin Verma AM* President Elect

13 August 2020

Nitin Verma:

Hello. My name is Nitin Verma and I'm the President-Elect of RANZCO. I come to you from the lens of the Muwinina people. I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia on whose land, members of our college live and work. In recognition that we are a bi-national college, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Rangatiratanga of Māori as Tangata Whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand. An ophthalmologist is a highly specialised, medically trained doctor who has trained in the diagnosis and management of eye conditions.

An ophthalmologist is a person who is adept at using surgical methods, lasers, and medical treatment for eye conditions. Above all, an ophthalmologist is somebody who's capable of treating the whole patient rather than a pair of eyes. The journey of a patient with an eye problem is not straightforward because they are often referred to us by general practitioners, by other colleagues, by optometrists. When they do come to us, our team includes technicians, nurses, orthoptists, and so on. So the patient actually has a long way to go. The ophthalmologist orchestrates the whole process, making sure that at the end of it, the best possible outcomes are achieved for the patient.

Now, ophthalmologists are not only doctors, but they're also managers. They're also teachers, they're administrators, they're patient advocates and researchers, and they work in different settings. They work in private practises. They work in public hospitals. They work in private hospitals. They work as administrators, and look after eye departments in universities and general hospitals, all across Australia and New Zealand. The ophthalmologist is a member of the college and the college is very keen to ensure that everybody, all the team members are doing their best to make sure that the patient is getting the best outcome for his or her problem when they come to the ophthalmologist.

The past few months have really brought the future much closer, much faster, than one had ever imagined. The COVID crisis is going to change many things in our way of thinking, in our way of working. It's going to change things at the international level, the political level, the government level, and also the healthcare level. Eye care is not going to be in any way exempt from or immune from these changes, because we are all part of a group that works towards the same aim, the same objective, the health, the eye health, and good outcomes for our patients.

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