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To: [medboardconsultation](#)
Subject: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia.
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I am extremely concerned that the Medical Board of Australia's proposed new *Code of Conduct for Australian Doctors* will give the Board **unprecedented control over doctors' private and political opinions.**

This code is a clear overreach of the Board's authority and **will only serve to politicise and weaponise the health profession's regulating body.**

One passage of concern is Section 2.1 of the *Code*, which says the boundary between public and private is "blurred":

"As a doctor, you need to acknowledge and consider the effect of your comments and actions outside work, including online, on your professional standing and on the reputation of the profession ... Behaviour which could undermine community trust in the profession ... may be considered unprofessional."

This would give the Board new power to harass doctors whose private political and moral opinions undermine "community trust" and "the reputation of the profession".

It also leaves doctors vulnerable to targeted attacks by activists—as seen by Dr van Gend.

Citizens who are doctors should be able to participate in public issues **without fear of losing their livelihoods.**

We don't want to lose free speech in this country. Debate is what is needed on issues not repression.

We are a democracy which is supposed to pride itself on free speech.

Elizabeth OBrien