

<https://www.change.org/p/australian-health-practioner-regulation-agency-stop-proposed-change-to-medical-board-code-of-conduct>

Stop proposed change to medical board code of conduct

459 have signed. Let's get to 500!

[Jason Lam](#) started this petition to [AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTIONER REGULATION AGENCY](#) and 1 other

Decision makers



AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTIONER REGULATIO...



[Greg Hunt MP](#)

Minister for Health and Sport

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With thanks to Dr Dr Amanda Fairweather who writes far better than I do

The proposed changes to the Medical Board's Code of conduct amounts to essentially a gag order, threatening those who speak out with disciplinary action and deregistration.

The relevant section is 2.1: *“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. If making public comment, you should acknowledge the profession’s generally accepted views and indicate when your personal opinion differs. Behaviour which could undermine community trust in the profession ... may be considered unprofessional.”*

Article [here](#) from the Australian

This vaguely worded paragraph could be used to stifle free speech and debate on contentious topics.

Australia is a pluralistic society with many different worldviews. This is one of the great strengths of our democracy. This is also a strength in the medical community.

The medical community is a broad church of widely dissenting views, as we would expect. However, it is this very practice of questioning the status quo that has been so invaluable in the progress of both the science and the politics of medicine.

Lets say you have two excellent doctors, who both recognise their role in treating addiction as an illness.

Let's say Doctor A publically advocates for decriminalisation of recreational drugs and increased injecting rooms.

Let's say Doctor B publically advocates for the state to continue to criminalise recreational drugs and opposes injecting rooms.

Let's say you have 2 excellent doctors who work in a state where abortion on demand is not legal after a certain gestation.

Let's say Doctor A publically advocates for abortion on demand up until term.

Let's say Doctor B publically advocates the law remain as is and late-term abortions only be conducted under highly regulated conditions.

Let's say you have 2 excellent doctors who both practice refugee health.

Let's say Doctor A publically advocates for the government to reform its refugee policy for the sake of refugee welfare.

Let's say Doctor B publically supports the government's approach in trying to "stop the boats" to indirectly improve refugee welfare.

This threat of disciplinary action clearly impinges on the ability of Doctors to comment and advocate for some of the most disadvantaged people in our society.

It limits their right to participate in the discussion of the most important social and medical issues such as Asylum seeker policy, abortion, euthanasia, drug policy, public health, gender, even myHR.

Now let's go back 50 years. At the time the commonly and medically held view was that homosexuality was a psychiatric disorder. Which doctor would have threatened with deregistration then- the one who publically promoted the commonly held view, or the one who publically dissented against it?

Medicine and its associated topics are not always clear cut. Social reform and medicine progress on respectful free thought, speech and debate. As both a doctor and a private citizen I would oppose any moves from AHPRA to limit that.

If you feel that medical professionals should not be threatened with deregistration for discussing difficult topics then please sign, share **and** also submit personally to

Public consultation on Good medical practice' to medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au
or by express mail to
Executive Officer, Medical, AHPRA, GPO Box 9958,
Melbourne 3001

by the third of August.

Draft code

here: <http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?record=WD18%2f25522&dbid=AP&chksum=a8i6jtK%2fa%2bYFGb%2f%2fL%2fxZ%2fw%3d%3d>