

From: Kennard, Alice
To: [medboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Consultation on changes to Code of Conduct "Good Medical Practice" by the Medical Board of Australia
Date: Thursday, 16 August 2018 12:55:46 PM

Dear AHPRA

I have deep concerns about the third paragraph on page 11 of the document, entitled "Professionalism".

It reads:

"Community trust in the medical profession is essential. Every doctor has a responsibility to behave ethically to justify this trust. The boundary between a doctor's personal and public profile can be 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. 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 is at odds with good medical practice and may be considered unprofessional."

I am concerned about the implications of this change in the definition of professionalism. This broad and intrusive redefinition limits doctors' capacity for freedom of speech. The medical profession has a proud tradition of questioning the status quo without fear of threat to professional registration. I must remind you that dissenting doctor's voices have rallied for protection of human rights on Manus Island despite this being contrary to the "generally accepted views". Equally, debate about politically fraught issues such as abortion – which remains illegal in some parts of the country – deserve to have our participation.

As Medical professionals we can offer a unique perspective on social and cultural issues and we must be allowed the freedom to engage in considered debate on difficult issues. The "generally accepted" status quo is not always the ethically appropriate perspective.

I request that this paragraph be removed.

Sincerely

Dr Alice Kennard

Nephrologist

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