

From: David Shearer
To: [medboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Please do not change the Code as proposed.
Date: Wednesday, 15 August 2018 8:07:31 PM

The Chair,
Australian Health Practitioners' Regulatory Authority,
Dear Sir/Madam,

Please do not change the Code as proposed.

Some of my reasons are:

Free speech in our Nation must not be limited by authoritarian dictates. There are principles in place in our Law to protect our people and freedom of conscientious expression by qualified medical practitioners must not be stymied as proposed.

There will be a 'minority' of practitioners with opinions differing from the 'majority'. In this free country, what possible basis is there to stymie debate and free expression?

Opinions need to be expressed, argued and tested in healthy development of policy.

Who is it that would determine the basis of 'regulation?'

Adherence to the code would then extend to realms of personal ethics and religious beliefs. That situation would lead to unlimited argument well beyond scientific rigour.

Doctors must be free to speak plainly on matters which challenge their conscience.

'Community trust' (which seems to be an argument in favour of 'regulation' of expression) is no argument in favour of the proposed change. Community trust would be reduced where personal 'truth' cannot be openly expressed in good faith.

Whoever can decide what 'generally accepted views' are? Is some Committee going to do that?

Who will be on the Committee? How is the Committee to take a complete assessment of

'views'? In such a scenario some in authority will have sway, for there will be no democratic process to determine policy on each point. Each point or issue is independent of each other and fraught with difficulty in that there will be a great variety of expression. The issues are in the realm of personal ethics and beliefs. There is no way that some 'authority' or 'committee' should be given power to restrict free expression in the area of 'conscience'.

There is so much more involved.

Please trust the members of your Profession.

Our healthy society is enhanced by straight talk with respect. Surely members of your Profession can be trusted to do that.

Yours sincerely,

David Shearer

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