

From: Walters, Giles [REDACTED]
To: [medboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Consultation on Good Medical Practice
Date: Wednesday, 15 August 2018 2:47:33 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."

This paragraph has very clear implications for a doctor's freedom of speech. When not at work, we need to be able to express views that may at times differ considerably from "generally accepted views" without fear of having our professional registration threatened. There has recently been a case of Dr David van Gend, who has been deeply involved in campaigning for the No campaign in the Same Sex Marriage Debate. He has been taken to the Medical Board for re-tweeting quotes from Lyle Shelton of the Australian Christian Lobby and Miranda Devine, a journalist. There was nothing hateful about him or what he has to say.

As Medical professionals we need to be able to have sensible conversations about difficult issues. Many views may not be "generally accepted" but that does not mean we should not be able to have a full and frank debate. Any suggestion that we may not have views that differ from others outside of our workplace is a major compromise on our freedom to speak.

I request that this paragraph be removed.

Sincerely

Dr Giles Walters

Nephrologist
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