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To: [medboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Submission re public consultation draft revision 2018.
Date: Tuesday, 31 July 2018 1:16:54 PM

To whom it may concern

Whereas I agree that doctors need to behave professionally and ethically, I believe that the insertion of Paragraph 4 in 2.1 (2018 Code) would not ensure this, but instead would work against doctors and nurses being ethical. The medical profession deal with life and death issues and with life changing issues. To behave ethically, doctors and nurses need to be able to maintain their own personal honesty and integrity which they cannot do if they are prohibited from speaking plainly and freely about matters that challenge their conscience.

Paragraph 4 in 2.1 states that, 'Community trust in the medical profession is essential'. I am part of the community and my trust in the medical profession would be diminished if I knew that those in the profession were saying only what AHPRA allowed them to say. Surely the public are more informed when different opinions and options are presented to them, than if the medical profession is only allowed to speak with one voice. Doctors make many important decisions in the day to day carrying out of their duties. For doctors to be professional and competent, they need to be people who think deeply and who have a conscience. These traits, which enable them to do their job effectively, are also the same traits that cause them to have passionate opinions about some issues, opinions which in a democratic country, they should be free to express.

I am gravely concerned about inherent restrictions on freedom of speech that may result from the insertion of this paragraph. Feeling too intimidated to speak according to conscience or feeling at risk of deregistration for speaking according to conscience is not a situation that should arise in a democratic country. Awareness and discussion of different opinions and options reduces ignorance and allows patients and the community in general to make more informed choices rather than having to conform to one dictated opinion. Most of the great advances in medicine and science have eventuated and continue to be made because someone dared to voice an opinion contrary to popular theory or belief. Another issue of concern, is how the 'profession's generally accepted views' would be determined. How would objectivity be maintained by those deciding on the profession's generally accepted view? Would they be influenced by vocal minorities that might not be reflective of the profession?

Doctors have a difficult enough job as it is, please do not burden, distract or inhibit them from doing their important work by restricting their freedom to voice the opinions that they hold.

Regards

Cheryl Hobson