

**From:** Miss Hayley Thomas  
**To:** [medboardconsultation](#)  
**Subject:** Public consultation on Good medical practice  
**Date:** Friday, 3 August 2018 11:35:46 AM

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To whom it may concern

I am writing to express my concern regarding a statement in section 2.1 of AHPRA's draft revised *Good medical practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia* document. I am specifically concerned about the requirement for doctors to indicate where their opinion differs from "the profession's generally accepted views". There are several reasons for this concern. First, I believe that through removing a sense of safety for doctors who express minority views, this change will stifle an intellectual climate conducive to critical thinking and debate. This climate is a great strength of our discipline, and essential to continue to develop best medical practice and to best serve our patients. Just this week I am attending a health research conference, and have seen again the value of people being free to respectfully express and discuss a variety of views, challenging and stimulating one another's thinking. My second concern is that the proposed changes encroach unacceptably upon doctors' personal freedom of speech. Doctors have a right to express their views. The way to protect the reputation of the profession is not to impinge upon this right by requiring them to indicate when their opinion differs from that of the profession. Instead, the appropriate response is for other doctors to employ their own freedom to respond by expressing and explaining the generally accepted view. This respects not only ourselves as doctors, but also the public, who have a right to consider the variety of views within the profession. Third, even withstanding the concerns I have already expressed, I believe that the difficulty of judging whether one's personal views differ from those generally accepted by the profession would create a climate of fear and uncertainty that would discourage the expression of views that could possibly be considered to fit this category, even where this may not be the case. This would compound the issues that I have already raised.

I believe that this issue needs to be amended before adopting a revised code. Thank you for considering these concerns.

Yours sincerely  
Dr Hayley Thomas  
General Practice Registrar  
BSc MBBS GradDipChrStuds DCH