

From: [REDACTED]
To: [dentalboardconsultation](#)
Subject: Response to the "scope of practice registration standard"
Date: Thursday, 13 June 2013 11:02:41 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you as a recent dental graduate whom upon reading the proposed changes to the "Scope of Practice Registration Standard" is extremely worried, not only for the future of my chosen profession, but for the safety and welfare of the Australian public should these changes take place.

The aim, according to the "public consultation paper" of these proposed changes was to provide greater clarity and certainty for practitioners to work within their scope of practice. This aim has failed to be met. Instead of providing greater clarity and certainty these proposed revisions muddy the water. The proposals provide very little distinction between a dentist and a dental therapist or hygienist. This poses a definite problem to the Australian public, allowing for confusion to occur during treatment. Patients will no longer be capable of distinguishing between their dentist and their dental therapist. I feel these changes are deceitful and misleading to the unsuspecting Australian public who expect high quality treatment to be carried out by a qualified dentist.

The legal ramifications and negative public perception that will follow such misleading changes will leave a dirty stain on the dental profession and this is what compels me to voice my concerns.

The title dentists hold of doctor reinforces that which the Australian public already knows to be true - we are medical professionals who have put in the "hard yards" at university to be granted the privilege of looking after not only our patients' oral health but overall health and well-being. The dental course requires competency in medicine and prepares all its students, through lectures and medical barrier examinations, to be ready to assess not only the patient's teeth but the entire patient, enabling the dentist to diagnose underlying medical conditions that may present in the mouth. Dentists are also competent in treating complex medically compromised patients. A dentist should be viewed as a specialist doctor of the oral cavity and it is for this reason that I strongly believe only a DENTIST should be allowed to diagnose and carry out appropriate restorative treatment. These proposed changes seem to suggest that there are misinformed individuals who view dentistry as a profession that can be easily picked up with a few short courses and assume that a dentist merely "drills and fills" teeth. A dentist is not a glorified tradesman but a medical professional with the well deserved title of "doctor".

I close with the following hypothetical: Would we ever allow any other medical vocation to undertake short courses and upon completion of these privately financed courses have the legal capability to assume the role of doctor? Would we ever allow any vocation other than doctors or medical specialists to, after very limited and privately run training, to be grouped under the same umbrella name as doctors?

Why not allow our pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists and nurses to all be called "medical practitioners" and allow such vocations the right to perform surgical treatments previously only allowed to be carried out by doctors. Surely these vocations only need undertake a few short courses and they too are as capable as their medical colleagues. Ludicrous isn't it?

Dentists are dentists, not dental practitioners and I did not complete seven years of university and two degrees to sit back and watch the death of my chosen profession.

Kind regards,

Very disgruntled dentist

Sent from my iPhone