From: Dr. Jody Shawn
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To the Chiropractors Board of Australia

Having read the Draft Code of Professional Practice for Chiropractors, I have serious reservations as to its ramifications and the negative tone rife throughout the document. It appears that the code is designed to dictate and restrict the scope of practice of Australian chiropractors. The ambiguity of the literature serves to confuse and cloud the subject matter, rather than providing concrete, clear guidelines.

Worryingly, the period and degree of "consultation" with the chiropractic profession appears to be minimal, with only a three-week opportunity for submissions. I fear this falls far short of 'wide-ranging consultation'. Exacerbated by the fact that many chiropractors and their families have holidays scheduled over the Easter period. This serves to further handicap an adequate response to this serious piece of potential legislation. As such, I feel it is necessary and just to request an extension of time to respond.

As I chiropractor I serve the public with quality, ethical chiropractic care, for the sole purpose of detecting and correcting spinal vertebral subluxations and reducing nerve interference. This is the tenant of a majority of chiropractors, however this unique core value is completely disregarded in the code draft. Virtually all of the codes refer to health professions other than chiropractic and scant few paragraphs are chiropractic specific.

I take my chiropractic responsibility seriously, as do the overwhelming majority of my colleagues. However, the code appears to paint with a wide brush, marring the profession because of a select few who choose to practice without ethical intent. I believe it to be reactive to some past indiscretions of members of the profession who are a tiny minority.

I believe it would be in the best interests of our profession if it were aligned with other national health boards and the National Chiropractors Board removed the current draft Code of professional Practice for Chiropractors in Australia from consideration. Just as many other healthcare groups exist under broader guidelines to support intra-professional self-regulation. It is not a mandatory requirement to develop its own code, and furthermore I restate that it hasn't undergone widespread consultation.

It is respectfully submitted that the National Board concentrate on developing robust complaints handling procedures that begin with positive education of the profession and utilize strong peer review components to address any trends in conduct that may develop in the future.

Those procedures should include:

- Talks to chiropractic students before they become registered about professional practice and the nature of complaints.
- Talks to the profession at association meetings.
- Regular written communication with the profession about matters that have arisen and the board's current attitude to such matters.
- The provision of advice and recommendations to chiropractors who have been found to have developed management procedures that have caused a complaint.

Would it not be better to focus energies on positively educating both practitioners and final year students about code of conduct and ethical issues instead of imposing restrictive and 'open to interpretation' guidelines on the profession? Also energies could be more effectively spent in developing a strong peer review process so we can best deal with our own who may 'stray from the fold'.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Jody Shawn
Chiropractor