

Dear Senators,

I have been a rural General Practitioner since 1981. I have been very involved in Medical Education, and assessment, and was Censor in Chief of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for two terms, from 1997 to 2001. I have examined colleagues for Fellowship in every state, and the ACT. I have been an examiner for the Australian Medical Council, examining International Medical Graduates for the second part (i.e. clinical ) section of the AMC examination. In short, I have assessed a lot of doctors.

I have been a member of a number of PSR committees.

As someone who has lived in areas of lower socio-economic demographics, I have seen people bought before courts for Centrelink fraud. They are publicly named before being tried, and if they have embezzled more than a few thousand dollars, gaoled.

The doctors I have seen appear before the PSR Committees are heard fairly. When their clinical practice not only fails to come with in bulls roar so to speak of accepted practice, nor accord with Medicare item descriptors, we find they are in breech.

Yet the legal system without fail finds a loophole. The tax payer continues to publicly fund them. I am writing about doctors, whom I and colleagues I have sat on committees with, believe have taken money from the Commonwealth under false pretences.

There are apparently 55,000 registered doctors in Australia as eligible to be paid by Medicare. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a few may be doing the wrong thing. Although a process has been set up, that is able to identify these people, it has been totally unable to bring any justice for the people of Australia.

The doctors I have seen before these committees bring our profession into disrepute. The lawyers who find loopholes do nothing to help the people of Australia- either taxpayers, or patients. The organizations that publicly decry the system do not represent the broad feeling within the medical profession.

Timothy John Flanagan  
MB,BS (1979, University of Tasmania), FRACGP  
21 William St,  
Longford,  
Tasmania 7301  
Tel. 03 6391 1170 (W)