



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians

8 April 2010

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Dear Ms Bleaser

**Re: Inquiry into Health Practitioner Regulation (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2010**

I am writing to you in regards to the recent request for comments on the Inquiry into the Health Practitioner Regulation (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2010.

Overall the College does not see these latest amendments as problematic; however, we would like to take this opportunity to make a few minor points:

- The College still finds the revised definition of a 'consultant physician' rather tautological – though we accept the difficulties in being specific regarding who defines a physician, or indeed, who defines the requirements for registration, the current definition is much too open;
- There is little reassurance about the role of Medical Colleges. The legislation should be clear about their continuing role;
- Needs clarification regarding the terms specialist and a consultant physician.

There are also broad concerns about the potential for political interference in the decisions of the new Medical Board of Australia by a Minister for Health. There must be some guarantees that politically motivated factors will not be able to intrude on the good intentions of the Parliament or the Medical Board. Professional and skill qualifications must always take precedence over political expediency and party politics. There is particular scope for this to happen in regards to Areas of Need. The special determinations for Ministers for Health in this area could potentially allow bypassing of the usual recognition of overseas trained doctors by Medical Colleges.

We thank you again for this opportunity to comment, and look forward to working with you on the further development of this and of other legislation.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Jennifer Alexander**  
Chief Executive Officer