

PETITION

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House the situation of Dr. Christoph Ahrens a German born orthopaedic surgeon who provides much needed care in an 'area of need position' in rural New South Wales. Dr. Ahrens has practised as an orthopaedic surgeon in Bega for almost six years. The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has requested for Dr. Ahrens to leave Bega, revert back to a trainee level and gain experience in spinal and paediatric surgery. These subspecialties are inappropriate to practise in a rural practice like Bega. He then would have to pass a full registrar exam, which again in many aspects is not relevant to his current practice. Dr. Ahrens' orthopaedic practice has been highly appreciated by the medical profession and patients of this area. His desire to remain practising in Bega is strongly supported by the Bega Medical Staff Council and the local community.

If Dr Christoph Ahrens were to be deregistered it would affect up to one hundred thousand residents of the far South Coast. Waiting lists for the residents of the far South Coast are likely to increase from one to two years. Trauma related orthopaedic surgery would be immediately reduced and not available every third week. Dr. Ahrens last working day will be the 30th June, 2011.

We therefore ask the House to urgently act on this situation to retain Dr. Christoph Ahrens in our rural community.