

To: House Standing Committee on Health and Ageing

22.08.2011

Re: Inquiry into Registration Processes and Support for Overseas Trained Doctors

Dear Committee Members,

<p>Supp. Submission No. 66.2 (Overseas Trained Doctors) Date: 23/08/2011</p>

Thank you very much for the constructive meeting on Tuesday 16th of August. I think I have been a bit light on answering your question "so where are you at now?" Well, I told you that I continue to work under AON status. This is actually still in progress and I don't know how much longer this will be possible. I'm hopeful for another year.

With regard to fellowship, the College is requesting for me to leave Bega for minimum of 6 months and up to 24 months of supervision and additional training in spinal and paediatric surgery. Both are subspecialties of orthopaedics that I have never practiced and no other surgeon would ever practice in a rural setting like in Bega. I would like to state that the request is not based on any problems that have arisen during my six years of work in Bega. As far as I understand the request for me to undergo this additional training was made to enable me to prepare for the registrar exit exam. This request is argued to be necessary as these areas of orthopaedics could not be properly assessed or competency verified as I don't practice them. My training experience has not been any inferior to what I have heard from my local colleague, on what his training exposure has been in these subspecialties, given that we both never intended to become spinal or paediatric orthopaedic surgeons.

In other words, it appears to me that the concerns have been fabricated in order to justify the request for me to sit this exam. The College has not made any suggestions of what happens to the needs of my patients, my employees or my business during the requested 6-24 months. Their request is unworkable and in my opinion unnecessary. You may remember that this assessment is a second assessment. The first assessment from 2005 required me to undergo supervision for one year (which has been rated very satisfactory) and then sit the exam. There have been no concerns voiced about spinal and paediatrics surgery in the 2005 assessment.

I am hoping for a recommendation from this inquiry that the assessment of senior doctors needs to become more flexible than the notorious request to sit the registrar exit exam. An assessment of demonstrated standards will be much fairer and appropriate than an assessment of theoretical standards and knowledge.

Kind regards

Christoph Ahrens

