SUBMISSION by ROBIN TOOHEY AM- A CONSUMER

Consumers need to be able to:  
A. TRUST  
B. RESPECT  
C. COMMUNICATE  
D. UNDERSTAND  
E. HAVE ACCOUNTABILITY  
F. SEE TRANSPARENCY  

These six elements empower consumers.

Simplicity of Legistration is also necessary. Consumers know nothing of A.P.H.R.A. Consumers in those states with their own complaints system - WA, NSW AND QLD - are all they know. They expect all practitioners to follow the law and standards set by both Government and Colleges. They know nothing about Australian boards. To tell consumers there are 9 boards would be new information. To tell a complaintant there is a mechanism of complaints involving both the State and Federal organisations that would be involved, they would find it confronting and could become very fearful about proceeding. For a consumer to follow the process transparency and continuing information step by step is paramount. Consumers expectation is knowledge of the proceedings and how the process of complaints is exercised so they can trust and respect the said process.

Consumers have no information about the Memorandum of understand (M.O.U.) between the State complaint system and the Federal system. They have no education or information as to when, where or how a State complaint transgresses from to Federal A.P.H.R.A. They do not understand as to why APHRA are involved. Because of this lack of knowledge and understanding they are fearful of the process. Could a cost to a consumer of the process of complaint be born is often said. The cost to a consumer is foremost if a consumer has a complaint. Could a provider sue a consumer in their thinking. Can the consumer afford the cost of this, should/could occur. These thoughts often stop a consumer placing a complaint. The complaint system needs to be simplified and results to be finalized within a time, say 6 months period at a maximum.

The reduction of boards, I fear, would result in more confusion. We have some professions, eg Sports Medicine, Social Workers
not yet on the official registration list. Having sat on a college committee writing standards for a medical profession, I feel the idea of less boards, is not a good idea. To fully understand all sections of each standard, it is implementation and monitoring of the standards requires each board member skills directed only to one profession. I have sat examining International Medical Graduates in one profession and that in itself requires a different skill set along with the professional standard already set. Rural very Remote and Regional professionals all have to practice skill sets for each area and within the standards already set, To join boards with such different skills and standards is putting a higher pressure on board members. Is this warranted and do we set up more problems in the future.

The UK has 16 boards at a lower cost to providers. Does this give a better consumer outcome? Consumers want a safe high quality transparent and accountable system.

The consumer voice needs to be heard. How many sit on boards or even APHRA itself. Not enough especially with such a multicultural society as Australia. There are many culture to be considered and professionals can unknowingly create angst unwillingly. This too needs to be considered. There are over 100 dialects in Aboriginal language, let alone the over 120 migrant languages and cultures. These too need to be understood. All avenues of the professional medical system and complaintant process need to address these issues.

Without consumers there is no need for professionals. I was amazed to find at the NSW consultation I was the only consumer present. A staff member of Consumer Health Forum attended but not one member of NSW Consumer Health Council. How often did this occur at other consultations.

Consumers should be at the forefront not at the end game. There is a need for education about APHRA and its processes principles and politics as well as MOU used by States. Transparency is essential and accountability imperative if TRUST and RESPECT are to be obtained and retained.

ROBIN TOOHEY AM

\[\text{Toohey 15-10-14}\]
Dear Mrs Toohey

Thank you for your advice to the review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions. Your submission will be brought to the attention of the Independent Reviewer, Mr Kim Snowball.

It is intended that all submissions will form part of the final report to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council by February 2015. It is expected that the Report will be publicly released following its acceptance by the Council.

If you prefer that the information you provided is not made publicly available please advise as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Louise Robinson
NRAS Review Project Manager