

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 16 June 2024 8:31 AM
To: Specialist IMG Pathways Review
Subject: Fwd: Public consultation on the revised Registration standard: specialist registration

ATTN: THE AHPRA Review Committee

I am a member of the Australian public and a medical doctor (GP registrar). I am happy to make a submission on this public consultation.

Having worked in Australia for the last 5 years (both public hospitals and general practice), I have seen the plight of patients waiting to see a specialist and the effect on their overall health. This usually results in progression of disease and increasing cost to the healthcare system and the individual/family to manage chronic conditions. Providing an accelerated pathway to specialist recognition in Australia for SIMGs (Specialist International Medical Graduates) is a very commendable plan in closing the above bottleneck in the health sector. This means that patients can have shorter wait times before seeing specialists and have much better outcomes.

I would also like to advocate for SIMGs who have lived and served in the Australian healthcare system even before these policy reforms were contemplated. Some of these doctors have previously been employed in senior medical positions like consultants, senior medical officers, senior medical practitioners, and clinical directors, without the privilege of using the specialist title. These doctors would be a very key resource in filling the specialist gap if they can be streamlined to this new pathway once implemented. There are many merits of considering these doctors namely:

1. These doctors have previously been enrolled or are currently enrolled in college specialist pathways, after their overseas specialist qualifications were assessed as being partially or substantially comparable to their respective Australian specialist qualifications. Many of these doctors have not achieved fellowship for various reasons including not passing some college exams (many of which have been phased out in preference for work-based assessments (WBA)).
2. This cohort of doctors are Australian citizens and permanent residents and have been practising in a culturally competent manner and they are well equipped and experienced with the operations of the Australian Health System having worked in Australia for a very long time.

3. In addition, these doctors are more familiar with the available resources, referral pathways and support services within the Country. Their specialist recognition under the fast-tracked pathway can lead to more efficient and coordinated care for patients in Australia.

4. Some of these doctors have had additional up-skilling training grants via their Specialist Colleges paid for by Australian taxpayers and the knowledge and experiences acquired from this training is now wasted, which should have been better used to serve the Australian population.

5. Furthermore, these doctors have practiced safely in Australia for a very long time mostly under general registration with AHPRA and are not allowed to use the title 'specialist' as they have not been given specialist recognition in Australia. It only makes sense to include this group into the fast tracked or expedited pathway to specialist recognition.

In conclusion, the plan to introduce the accelerated pathway for specialist recognition of SIMGs in Australia is very welcome and I look forward to its implementation.

Thank you

Kind Regards

 (Happy to anonymously publish this submission)