

229

Enquiries to: Jim O'Dempsey
Telephone: 3234 0713
Our ref:

23 March 2005

Dr S Buckland
Director General
Queensland Health
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Dr Buckland

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 March 2005 which was considered by the Board at its meeting of 22 March.

In considering your request, the Board noted that development, implementation and monitoring of a safe work hours standard was consistent both with its legislative functions and strategic direction.

In regard to the first of these matters, s.11(e) *Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001* ('the Act') provides that the Board has the function to *promote high standards of practice of the profession by registrants*. More importantly, the Act also establishes that in performing its functions, the Board must act independently, impartially and in the public interest.

Given the complexity of the structure of the profession and the breadth of professional practice and employment settings, it is appropriate that the Board, as an independent statutory authority, establishes this standard as opposed to it being developed by any one employer, professional association or college. Consistent with its strategic direction, the Board will undertake this important activity through an extensive and inclusive consultation process.

The Board looks forward to your contribution during such consultation and to that from other key stakeholders in the private sector and from professional and consumer groups.

An indicative budget and timeline for this project has also been considered by the Board and is detailed in the enclosure. The Board is appreciative of your offer of funding support given its revenue is limited to fees generated through the registration process and it does not hold any significant reserves. As such, the Board seeks \$212,159 in funding.

Your advice on the process and timing of payment of such a non repayable grant would be appreciated. Should you or your officers require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact Mr O'Dempsey on 3225 2512.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mary Cohn
Chairperson, Medical Board of Queensland

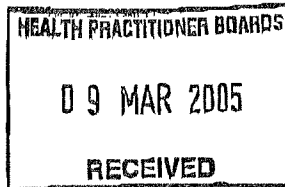


**Queensland
Government**

Queensland Health

Enquiries to: Jill Piffaget
Telephone: (07) 323 41177
Facsimile: (07) 323 41482

Mr Jim O'Dempsey
Chief Executive Officer
The Medical Board of Queensland
GPO Box 2438
BRISBANE QLD 4001



Jim
Dear Mr O'Dempsey

Thank you for your attendance at the meeting yesterday to discuss safe working hours for doctors.

As indicated, I strongly believe that this issue rests with The Medical Board of Queensland. This is in the context of the Board's consideration of the Doneman case where it was clear that a position on safe hours and fatigue were taken into account as a mitigating factor in an adverse clinical outcome. I am also aware of previous conversations that have involved The Medical Board where concerns have been expressed about long and unlimited working hours of private surgeons.

I have briefed the Minister and advised him that safe hours of work is not an industrial issue but is a professional standards issue. As such, I request that The Board consider accepting the role of developing, implementing and monitoring standards that relate to safe hours of work for doctors.

If considered appropriate, I am prepared to personally meet with Board members to discuss. I understand that if the above proposal is accepted that it may impact on The Board's workload. As stated yesterday, I would be prepared to contribute funding to employ a project officer to undertake whatever work maybe necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely

Steve Buckland
Dr Steve Buckland
Director-General
09/03/2005

Office
19th Floor
Queensland Health Building
147 - 163 Charlotte Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Postal
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Phone
(07) 323 41170

Fax
(07) 323 41482