

The Medical Board has become the censorship board

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YOU know our culture has reached peak Kafka when a doctor is hauled before his medical board on professional misconduct charges for retweeting two tweets by a conservative Senate candidate promoting a book about gender ideology and one of my columns.

Yes, really.

That's what happened to [Toowoomba GP Dr David van Gend](#) two weeks ago when the prosecutorial arm of the Medical Board of Australia, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, notified him of a complaint.

AHPRA alleges van Gend may be guilty of “discriminatory conduct” for twice retweeting Australian Conservatives candidate Lyle Shelton in April.

One of Shelton's tweets was a selfie with American author Ryan Anderson from the conservative Heritage Foundation: “A privilege to catch up with ... the author of *How Harry Became Sally*. A must read for anyone trying to understand how to push back on radical gender indoctrination of our children.”

The other Shelton tweet was a retweet of [a column of mine critical of gender fluidity classes in schools, titled “SSM \[same-sex marriage\] has led exactly where we were warned it would”](#).

Van Gend, a conservative Christian, retweeted these tweets without comment. That is the sum total of his offending.

Three months later, he received the ominous “notification about your conduct” from AHPRA.

The complainant alleges van Gend is “presenting as a medical practitioner and providing information that is ‘clearly not medically, psychologically, nor scientifically based’ and not promoting public health,” APHRA states.

“The practitioner (van Gend) has ‘retweeted’ Mr Lyle Shelton's tweets promoting books that ‘push back on radical gender indoctrination of children’, and an article titled ‘SSM has led exactly where we warned it would’”.

Dr David van Gend must explain to the Medical Board whether his retweeting of two items critical of “gender indoctrination” is against the health of his community and patients.

He must explain in writing to the Medical Board by 12pm Thursday: “Whether your posting on social media ‘twitter’ promotes the health of the community and advances the health and wellbeing of individual patients”.

APHRA is a mighty body with powers to prosecute, involve police and apply criminal sanctions to doctors who transgress medical ethics and the law. It was designed to

stop killers, incompetents and charlatans who endanger lives, not to stop private citizens with medical degrees from expressing their opinions.

What makes this case all the more sinister is the fact the Board now wants to apply even more repressive speech controls on medicos.

It is drafting an Orwellian revision to its code of conduct which would use the threat of deregistration to silence dissenting doctors who speak out — or even silently retweet — on contentious topics from euthanasia to gender reassignment in children.

Of particular concern to doctors is section 2.1 of the draft code: “you need to acknowledge and consider the effect of your comments and actions outside work, including online, on your professional standing and on the reputation of the profession. If making public comment, you should acknowledge the profession’s generally accepted views and indicate when your personal opinion differs. Behaviour which could undermine community trust in the profession ... may be considered unprofessional.”

As one group of concerned doctors wrote in a submission to the Board:

“This paragraph can be used against free speech and free debate... Great advances in medicine and social action have been made as a result of doctors ‘going against the flow’.”

Paediatrics Professor Dr John Whitehall, from Western Sydney University, is [a rare brave voice against the current consensus for medical intervention in childhood gender dysphoria](#), known as the Dutch Protocol. This involves giving the child puberty-blocking hormones, leading invariably to cross-sex hormones and sex change surgery with unknown consequences for brain development.

Professor John Whitehall has questioned the willingness of the doctors and the courts to allow young children to alter their gender via medical intervention. Whitehall advises instead a compassionate “watch and wait” approach which usually sees dysphoria disappear through puberty. The child often turns out simply to be homosexual.

Dr Whitehall points out that the medical consensus also once was for frontal lobotomies, performed with just as little scientific evidence.

Eugenics was the medical consensus mid-last century, when mentally ill and disabled people were sterilised to eradicate their genes.

“If doctors had spoken out more vociferously, the eugenics program in America may not have been so widespread,” he says.

Through history, dissident doctors opposed to the medical consensus have advanced science.

In the 19th Century, Hungarian doctor Ignaz Semmelweis hypothesised that new mothers were dying of childbed fever in his Vienna hospital because doctors weren’t washing their hands. He asked them to clean their hands with chlorine before attending childbirths and the rate of childbed fever plummeted.

The complaint against Dr David Van Gend.

But the doctors didn't like being blamed so they sacked Semmelweis and he ended up in a mental asylum. Today we know he was right. Hand-washing prevents the spread of disease.

You don't have to agree with dissident doctors, but no-one has the right to silence them under threat of serious legal sanctions.

"The Board must not be allowed to give itself extra powers to censor and intimidate doctors who do not share its worldview," says van Gend.

Health Minister Greg Hunt should tell the Board to stick to "regulating the medical competence of doctors, not their political correctness".

Amen. Submissions about the medical code can be made by the public via the AHPRA website. The deadline is Friday. If you value free speech, get cracking.