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Mr Peter Carver
Executive Director
National Health Workforce Taskforce
GPO Box 4057
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Dear Mr Carver,

Submission: Titles of Doctor and Professor

I refer to the *Consultation Paper: Proposed Registration Arrangements* regarding a national registration and accreditation scheme for the health professions, which has only recently come to my attention. I note that submissions on this consultation paper closed on 29 October 2008 but ask that you accept this late submission.

I have very serious concerns with Section 8.1 of the paper on "Title Protection" and Proposal 8.1.1 that there be no statutory restriction on the use of the titles 'Doctor' or 'Professor', describing them merely as "courtesy titles." Both titles hold immense significance in the academic community. The use of 'Professor' is reserved for the most highly regarded academics. It is only bestowed upon those with medical qualifications on the same basis as those who come from any other discipline. It is by no means a "courtesy title" and I do not believe it is regarded in the wider community any differently.

The use of the title 'Doctor' is similarly important. Medical practitioners completing an MBBS course are recognised as being in a special category, but that is the only exception to the rule that the title 'Doctor' is conferred on those who have completed an academic doctorate. The MBBS course is also well recognised as being lengthy and arduous with similar standards of scholarship to a PhD.

Whilst the Taskforce is concerned with the narrower health field, any move to sanction the widespread use of the titles 'Doctor' and 'Professor' without their use being based upon an academic qualification, or the commonly accepted use for medical practitioners, will have a negative impact in the wider community. Enabling any person who works in an allied health field to take up the title of 'Doctor' or indeed 'Professor' would severely undermine the credibility that the community attaches to the title and its academic significance.

I urge you to consult with the broader academic and higher education sectors before such a proposal is considered any further.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Chubb AC
Vice-Chancellor

cc: The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education
The Hon Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health and Ageing
Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research