
Subject: Therapeutic qualifications re general registration
Date: Wednesday, 2 March 2011 9:35:48 PM

Colin Waldron, Chair OBA, Firstly thanks for this opportunity to engage with the new Optometry Board of Australia at this early stage of its existence. I have been a respondent to the survey initiated by the ACO and am broadly in agreement with its discussion to seek therapeutic qualifications for all optometrists at some stage at least 10 years in the future (~2023) and for this condition to apply to overseas applicants and or registrants. Whilst I am very aspirational for the scope and delivery of quality optometric services to all Australians wherever they may live, consideration for optometrists who live regionally, work part-time, are single parents, embroiled in busy family life, those who may have no interest in therapeutics..to name just a few possible scenarios..tempers my belief that universal therapeutic registration is a goal that is practically and industrially achievable. My personal view, is this matter will bring clarity in time, especially with projections that the 20/80 split will change to 80/20, in favour of therapeutics in a decade. As an optometrist of over 33 years practice, my reflection is whilst the therapeutic "divide" is clearly the biggest difference between practice modes in my career, there has always been prior and still is, as with any profession, amongst the body of currently practising optoms, a considerable range of skills and professional acumen. Continuing education has been a great achievement for exposure to contemporary standards. The current 20/80 split does SPEAK to the willingness of optoms to embrace the therapeutic challenge, particularly given the number of courses run over recent years and the preponderance of recent graduates automatically complying. Encourage the desire for improved professional standards, further enhance the esteem of Optometry within the Australian community by all means....but I suspect the profession will transition towards full therapeutic registration over time and most probably need, to not unreasonably grandfather a diminishing number of Optoms who for a large variety of reasons will be unable or simply not desirous, to comply. Again thanks for your requests for comments and good luck with your duties. Kind Regards, Trevor Pritchard