

**RELEASED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (Cth)**



To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: 'Attention: Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

N

I have read the document *Consultation paper on registration standards and related matters* and congratulate the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia on a cogent and responsible paper. I would like to comment on one section, re English language.

While I understand perfectly the need to ensure all applicants for registration have an appropriate level of English, I feel the proposal has some problems, and have a simple solution. There are two areas of discrimination – firstly, the list of countries. How can one include the United Kingdom, when accents and language are so different across the whole country, eg, a Glaswegian's accent is almost incomprehensible to someone from Somerset, while even within counties, eg. across Yorkshire, language useage and meaning can be different? Many accents from a range of areas within the UK are, to Australians, very difficult to understand. I use the UK purely as an example (and one I know well); however, such reasoning would pertain for most of the other countries on the list, eg. the United States of America. However, all these people would have English as their first, and probably only, language. The same may pertain to people from countries not on the list, eg. India.

My other concern is that asking those whose mother tongue is English is also discriminatory when they are coming to work in a country where almost everyone also has English as their native language.

My suggested solution is to ask applicants to provide evidence that their mother language is English, and require only those for whom it is not to undertake an IELTS or other assessment.

Linda Shields

Professor Linda Shields PhD, FRCNA | Professor of Paediatric and Child Health Nursing | Child and Adolescent Health Service | Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute | Curtin University of Technology | GPO Box U1987 | Perth | Western Australia | 6845 | Australia