**Submission on the OBA Guidelines on Advertising**

As a clinical optometrist in full time practice, I am writing to provide feedback on section 8.2.1 “ Use of titles in advertising” in the common guidelines and Code of conduct.

I have been using the title “Dr” for approximately 2 ½ years. Although concerns have been expressed that the use of the title could mislead the public into believing that an optometrist is a medical practitioner, I have not personally experienced this and believe that the current guidelines make it extremely unlikely. Furthermore, it is also difficult to understand why any optometrist would wish to be identified as a medical practitioner as it is universally accepted that management of ocular pathology by our profession is not economically viable.

On rare occasions potential patients enquire whether I am an optometrist or ophthalmologist. They are obviously informed that I am an optometrist. The frequency of this enquiry has not changed since I adopted the title.

I believe that the professional title of “Dr” highlights a commitment to professional service and the placement of patient care ahead of commercial interests. This is particularly important in the current climate of commercialism with its retail focus. Naturally, for the title to have any credibility the practitioner’s actions need to be consistent with patient expectations of a focus on vision correction and ocular health.

Optometrists wishing to highlight their healthcare rather than retail focus should be permitted to use the title as outlined in the regulations.

I support the current guidelines which provide optometrists with the same opportunity as dentists to be identified as allied healthcare professionals.

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