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## Victorian Doctor Suspended Over Social Media Views Sparks Freedom of Speech Debate

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– Categories: Human Rights



A general practitioner (GP) in Victoria has been suspended following an anonymous complaint regarding his personal views shared on social media. The posts, which touched on controversial topics such as abortion, gender identity and COVID-19 policies, were labelled “disrespectful and derogatory” by regulatory authorities. However, critics

have raised concerns that the disciplinary action may set a troubling precedent for freedom of expression, particularly when private commentary is punished despite not directly impacting patient care.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), which oversees medical licensing, acted on the anonymous tip-off by launching an investigation into the GP's social media content. Although the practitioner made the posts in a personal capacity, regulators deemed the language and viewpoints to be in conflict with professional standards. The agency claims that medical professionals must maintain public trust and avoid commentary that may be viewed as discriminatory or undermining community confidence in health institutions.



Supporters of the suspended doctor argue that the decision represents a concerning overreach and an attack on individual liberties. Civil liberties advocates point out that silencing dissenting views, even if unpopular, weakens democratic debate and limits critical discussion on public policy. Many warn that this action could deter professionals from speaking out on sensitive topics, including health mandates and ethical issues, for fear of losing their livelihoods. According to human rights lawyer Chris Merritt, “We are witnessing the weaponisation of professional codes to suppress politically incorrect viewpoints.”

The suspension has reignited calls for reform to ensure that regulators balance professional accountability with the right to personal opinion. In a time when social media is increasingly used to shape public discourse, drawing a line between professional misconduct and free expression is more important than ever. While respect and sensitivity are essential in any profession, Australia must be cautious not to slide into a climate where professionals are punished for holding beliefs that differ from

prevailing narratives. As the debate unfolds, this case may well become a landmark moment in the conversation about freedom of speech, professionalism and the evolving boundaries of acceptable public dialogue in a democratic society.

