



25 April 2011

Mr John Byrne
ASAPO President
24 Carbine St
DONVALE VIC 3111

Dear John

Thank you for sending your letter responding to the article 'Advocating for Anaesthetic Nurses' that was published in the Summer 2010 edition of the VPNG Newsletter *Snippets*.

On behalf of VPNG, I would like to respond to some of your arguments that you have put forward. I will address them as received in your letter.

The educational preparation of perioperative nurses, and those who work as anaesthetic nurses, in comparison to anaesthetic technicians is vastly different. Nurses complete a three year Bachelor of Nursing that equips them generically for nursing. Graduate Year nurses who secure a position in the operating suite are thus just novices entering nursing and not perioperative nursing specifically. This graduate year allows them to form an opinion of where they might progress in their nursing career. Those that choose perioperative nursing then undertake post graduate studies at Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters level where they can specialise in anaesthetic / postanaesthetic nursing. This is a far greater depth and breadth of knowledge than that required for a direct entry Diploma course.

The Bachelor of Nursing provides a platform where nurses learn to care for patients with a variety of disease processes, surgical procedures, patients who are in pain, fear, distress and dying and where they develop holistic patient assessment skills. Ultimately, this knowledge and understanding contributes to the provision of quality perioperative patient care. It offers a unique perspective to patient care within the anaesthetic assistant role.

I also point out that all health care professionals are regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) that currently incorporates 10 national boards in the national registration and accreditation scheme with a further four to be included on the 1st July 2012. AHPRA's primary role is to protect the public.

The primary purpose of the opinion piece in *Snippets* was to alert nurses to the advertisement for anaesthetic nurses to teach in an anaesthetic technician course. This would seem incongruous when anaesthetic nurses do not wish encroachment into their role.

Continued arguments between our conflicting positions will be perpetual because of the primary essence of our belief, and that belief is that **holistic nursing care** provided by nurses is an essential requirement in the provision of complete quality and safe care to the perioperative patient undergoing anaesthetic. VPNG could support the role of the anaesthetic technician in a complimentary position that worked in collaboration with an anaesthetic nurse, not as a replacement role. However that would be a political decision that is out of your and my hands. Therefore VPNG will continue to promote the role of assistant to the anaesthetist as a perioperative nurse.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Scholtes', written in a cursive style.

DANIEL SCHOLTES
VPNG PRESIDENT 2010-2012