

Motivation letter

**Re: Nomination for Deputy National Representative (Australia)**

Candidate: Dr Kalli Spencer

Organisation: University of New South Wales

To whom it may concern

I would like to apply for this position as teaching communication skills is a passion of mine.

After graduation from my medical degree (2008) I signed up to teach clinical and communication skills at the same institution. I have been teaching medical students and junior doctors ever since.

My interest in communication skills can be traced back to school, I was always part of the school drama club. I decided to formalise my training and completed all the graded speech and drama exams through Trinity College London. During my medical degree I completed my licentiate in Speech and Drama Teaching, completing a thesis looking at the human body and the voice in drama education.

I used these skills to train junior doctors to deliver sexual education to high school students, as there was rising rates of teenage pregnancy at the time in South Africa. Health promotion and patient education has been an interest of mine for some time and I have spent several years publicly speaking about it whether it be face to face, over the radio or on television. Having to present to different communities during this time allowed me to fine tune my cross-cultural communication skills.

After specialising in urology, I again realised the importance of sexual education, this time with an emphasis on oncology. As a consultant urologist I placed a big emphasis on history taking for sensitive topics when training registrars. Outside of the workplace my skillset came in handy to address a significant gap in support for cancer patients. To prepare me for the role as support group leader, I completed a Diploma in Professional counselling which helped to once again refine my communication skills. I was also able to train other cancer survivors, starting out as support group leaders, to improve their communication skills.

I then transitioned from clinical practice into full time academia, lecturing at Macquarie University, University of Sydney and as senior lecturer in clinical skills at my current institution. The focus of my role in the last 4 years has been to teach clinical and communication skills to medical students. Within these roles I have been able to collaborate with health care professionals across the allied health care disciplines, from physiotherapy and exercise physiology to optometry and psychology. What I have realised is we all share the same passion for ensuring the next generation of graduates are able to communicate effectively with their patients. Patients don't necessarily remember how much you know or how you examined them, they do care how you spoke to them and cared for them. To this end a central focus of the curriculum I am part of designing and delivering places a large emphasis on empathy and patient centred care, which has always been the philosophy in my personal practice. During my tenure, I have been involved in research looking at communication skills training. I was part of the team who designed a sexual abuse and domestic violence curriculum for the medicine program, specifically focussing on communication. I have attended several local and international education conferences which is a great place to network and collaborate across

universities and disciplines. And through that networking is how I came to discover Professor Marcy Rosenbaum and EACH. And through EACH is how I came across Dr Sarah White and Dr Conor Giligan.

Sarah and I work at the same institution and together we created a Healthcare Communication community of practice, with the opportunity for interdepartmental collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas.

When I saw the call for nominations for the role of Deputy National Representative, I thought I would jump at the opportunity. I have been impressed by the courses and workshops that EACH offers, which has really made a significant impact on the work that I do. Taking on this role will allow me to join a team of like-minded professionals who all want to ensure that the end user gets the type of communication during their healthcare encounters they deserve. It will offer an opportunity to spread the word about the important work that EACH does, promoting training programs, conferences, scholarships and awards, the PEC and influencing policy. I would be honoured to support the National Representative in their role locally, but also to ensure Australia remains a key player on the global stage.

Thank you for taking the time to review my nomination.