



To,

Senate Finance and administration Committee

Parliament House

Canberra

Subject: Problems in regarding to the registration as a Nurse with AHPRA.

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Samjhana Kunwar and I completed my Bachelor of Nursing from the USQ, Toowoomba in July 2010. I am currently registered in AHPRA with condition and working as a RN in an aged care. I am writing this letter in response to the letter sent to me by QNU about your inquiry with the AHPRA. I have faced so many troubles with AHPRA regarding my registration. So I found this as a great opportunity to express my feelings regarding the trouble and frustrations I faced with AHPRA.

Firstly, the reception staffs of the AHPRA are not friendly and they never gave me the correct information when I needed. Every time I went to ask them a question, I never get any satisfactory answer from them. They always told me that they are not sure and they are working on it and they will let us know which they never did. Neither they let us to speak with any other staff who may know the answer; instead they said we are not allowed to talk with anybody inside.

Moreover, at that time (July2010) there was no confirmed rule about the English language test system for the student from overseas which was the most confusing matter. Because of that I am still facing plethora of difficulties in getting my full registration. In their website, it was clearly written that we need to get Academic level 7 IELTS result to register with them; it was not written that they need 7 in each module of the IELTS. I asked more clarification with them about this but again they did not tell me the correct answer. They said they are working on it. Keeping that in mind, I thought it will be worthy to apply for registration early so that I can get my registration quickly and I also thought there will be no harm giving them the result of IELTS where I got overall 7 because there was no indication of each band 7 in IELTS anywhere. So I submitted my application at the end of July with that IELTS result.

Unfortunately, the rule changed after about a month that either they need each band 7 in IELTS or if we have completed our year 12 in English medium then we don't need to sit for the IELTS test. It was very good news for most of the international student because in Nepal, most of the educational provider have the English Medium Study. I also completed my diploma in English medium in Nepal. So I was sure about getting the registration. After that, I also submitted the letter to prove that I have completed my study in English medium and waited for the response from them.

After 6 weeks, I received a letter from AHPRA saying that according to the result submitted to them, I haven't got each band 7 in IELTS so that I must sit for and IELTS test and I need

to submit that to get my registration. I was shocked and thought that it might be a mistake because they might not have received my letter (proof of English medium Study). So I went to speak with them again and the lady in reception said that it is a mistake and she asked me to resubmit that letter. I did whatever she said and came back. After 3 weeks, my friend told me that she received the same letter and she went and spoke with them and they did a big counselling with her and told that she must get each band 7 to get the registration because there is no use of English medium study if you can't get the each band 7. So I was amazed again and I went and asked the same lady in reception and at that time she told me the same answer as my friend told me. I asked her why didn't she tell me before and she replied she didn't know that I have submitted the IELTS test. But I have told her everything in previous visit but there was no point of arguing with her so I left their office quietly.

At that time, I felt I was the most unlucky person in the world because all of my friends who complete the same level study with me got their registration because they did not submit any IELTS to AHPRA and our big mistake (according to AHPRA) was submitting the IELTS. On the other hand, my visa was about to expire in September so I had to do something before it expired. But again they said it is not their problem. Only option I have left at that time was to go to the union (QNU) and ask the senior legal officer to speak on our behalf with AHPRA. So we (my friends with the similar situation) did the same and the senior Legal officer of the QNU had a board meeting with AHPRA and they decided to register with condition and the condition was to get the each band 7 in IELTS before 31st may 2011 and work under the supervision of RN and also notify the employer about the condition.

It was a bit of relief however I always feel that it is an injustice because my entire friend with the same qualification and same or less skills of English competency got the full registration. I am 100% sure that nobody will get each band 7 in IELTS after completing the study in English medium because they are two different things. The way they test English in IELTS is totally different. There is very limited time and variety of tasks (totally different than your course) to complete. I can also guarantee that not even the people with English speaking background can get each band 7 in IELTS easily. All of my friends who now got the full registration were also struggling to get the each band 7 before AHPRA's new rule. How can AHPRA believe that they are safe with them and not with us? It is a very big injustice with us.

Finally, my problem is that I am unable to get each band 7 in one sitting till this date and my registration is due to renew in this May. I don't know what will happen next. If I don't get my registration renewed I will have to return to my country with empty hands as there will be no value of my 2 years study without registration. I have tried about 15 times to get each band 7 and every time I get more than 7 in 3 bands and always 6.5 in one band and that band is different each time for e.g. If it I get 6.5 in reading this time then next one will be writing and after that it will be speaking and so on... the exam is so frustrating because I cannot go to work on that day, I lose \$317 for one test and I have to face the stress of exam. I wasted thousands of money in IELTS and the results are always frustrating. I have even got 8 and 8.5 in different band in different time but not at once. So I don't know what sense it makes....

In conclusion, some of my unanswered questions are:

1. Why doesn't AHPRA trust the University study of its own country? How can a student pass 2 years bachelor level study in Australia without being competent in English language? And how do they pass the placement without it? If they have passed why do they have to again sit for this IELTS test for registration?
2. How can it be believed that whoever did finish year 12 study in English medium is totally equivalent to the Each band 7 in IELTS? Where I have seen all those people who got registration now were struggling to get the each band 7 before.
3. How can the 3 hours test prove that the person is totally competent for the English language test while considering the time limit and different topics of essay in every test and all those irreverent topic in speaking every time?
4. What is difference of getting 7 in two sitting than in one sitting? Does person's capacity changes every week? For e.g. If I get 6.5 in speaking this time and get 8 in next week, does that mean my skill improved a lot this week than last week or vice versa? Exactly same thing happens to me. So I am getting 8 in one band this time and 6.5 next week in the same band. What does that prove? Does it prove that my capacity changes every week or it is because of different exam question and different exam condition every time?
5. Why didn't my application considered according to the previous rule when it was submitted before the new rule? Even if the new rule applies why I was excluded even when I was still qualified for the registration? How can they think that all the people who didn't submitted the IELTS are capable of getting each band 7 when everybody (all of my friends of same batch) witnessed them sitting for an IELTS test? Why can't they notice the record that there were thousands of students qualified for an EEN 1-2 years before but were not registered because of not being able to get each band 7 IELTS and they were suddenly registered with AHPRA with their new rule of the alternative for IELTS? Isn't this sufficient enough to realise that studying English medium is in any way not equivalent to the each band 7 IELTS? If they know why can't they be practical?
6. Even at work, I have to deal with all sorts of communication issues with resident (especially resident with dementia), doctors, staff and family in an aged care. Is it possible without the incompetency of English? What about the documentation? If my manager, staffs, residents and family are happy with my English skills why can't AHPRA come and evaluate? If my registration doesn't get renewed, will I be suddenly disqualified from nursing after May? What about my work experience? No value for this?

To sum up, I think I am writing too long. You can understand by now that how much trouble and frustration I faced with AHPRA. I am really worried about my registration and the time I spent in my studies. Registration is the key point for all this because I won't be able to apply my knowledge from my study in anywhere in the world without it. I have finished my study with the help of the loan from bank, which I am not able to pay back yet. If I will have to

return to my country I will have nothing with me. So please consider this letter even if it is too long but this represents the trouble of hundreds of international students who come to study in Australia. I wrote this letter in behalf of my other friends as well who are in the same situation. Finally this was my great opportunity to express my feelings with you. I will be very grateful for your help in solving these issues with AHPRA. I hope this will bring the positive outcome and there will be no nurse like me in future facing similar situation with AHPRA. I am looking forward to hear back from you.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely

