

To the committee and treasury.

In respect of the current government's election commitment to remove the requirement to undertake any additional formal study to meet the education standards for 'experienced advisers' – with at least 10 years of full-time equivalent experience in Australia and a clean disciplinary record. I put forward my submission as an adviser with over 20 years of experience in this profession. A lot of what I put forth has been previously communicated to the various past and present ministers, local members of parliament and the various key stakeholders.

I am in total agreement with and in full support of the current government's position on and subsequent move to an 'experienced/transitional pathway' for existing advisers with unblemished records. For so many of us practitioners and key industry stakeholders, and importantly, the many millions of Australian's who currently have an adviser or will certainly be needing one at some point, it is so obviously the logical and prudent approach. And it must be said that any criticism of such move comes only from those whose financial windfall will be affected and/or those who are wilfully ignorant of the issues. For those whose financial windfall will be affected, I refer to certain universities and education providers who were rubbing their hands with great joy at all this additional revenue all of a sudden created over the next many years from experienced professionals being required to undertake these arbitrary courses at considerable personal cost. As for those who are wilfully ignorant of the issues. Well, I speak of those who apply a blanket very simplistic - and a lot of times just incorrect - view that lack of education of past and present practitioners caused the many issues, and that degree qualification for already highly experienced and unblemished professionals is required. Let me be frank, in that either of these parties care not a damn about ensuring the average Australian is able to receive good and affordable financial advice. Rather, it's self-interest, grandstanding and virtue signalling to promote their own agenda's they're concerned about, and they found this as an avenue to do so.

As I've already written on numerous occasions, and at length, to the various ministers and key stakeholders, I'll keep it as brief as I can for this submission and re-hash some of what I've expressed in the past. For it has been a tiring and exhausting process having to make the same pertinent and rational points many times over.

Whilst I applaud and absolutely support the introduction of higher education standards to be able to practice as a financial planner/adviser for new and/or relatively new entrants, I think the treatment of existing practitioners has been nothing short of appalling. Testament to this appalling treatment is that I, a practitioner of 22 years now, with an unblemished compliance & complaints record, in its current iteration, am required to study 4 whole subjects in order to satisfy that I'm 1) Ethical; and 2) Technically capable. All in addition to a 'Financial Adviser National Examination' and the '40 hours of annual CPD'. Absolutely gobsmacking and extraordinary. Now, I have already completed the FASEA Exam, as well as one of the four subjects – so I have three remaining. I will tell you, that the sacrifice in time away from my family and my work, and the stress and anxiety endured to get through these two hurdles thus far, was significant. It's taken a toll on both my productivity at work (actually resulting in less Australians being able to get advice), and my family – given the family dinners and weekends I've had to miss in order to dedicate the extensive hours of study required. And so the thought of having to do this another three more times (under the current iteration) is simply overwhelming and therefore brings on more stress and anxiety.

I, and many of my fellow experienced practitioners have no issue at all with the National Exam and CPD (of which we already do CPD and have been doing for many years). However, in my case, four whole additional subjects of study to achieve a Graduate Diploma is completely superfluous and just

plain nonsensical. Firstly, the failure in ethics within our profession has very little to do with the majority of practitioners, rather, as you should all know by now (Royal Commission), it has absolutely everything to do with the vertically integrated business models. It's this conflicted model, once done away with, that will completely result in better outcomes for the profession and ultimately the consumers/clients. That's it. A practitioner that may already have an unethical pre-disposition will not all of a sudden simply become ethical by virtue of any amount of study. This is a completely ludicrous proposition. In fact, of the individual practitioners who I have come across over the years who have practiced unethically (some already banned by ASIC), many of them indeed were, and are highly academically educated (be it B. Com, B. Ec, B. Bus, MBA etc. etc.). However did that stop their unethical behaviour? Of course not. There is simply no correlation with academic study and ethics. By way of analogy, do you mean to tell me that highly academic legal, medical professionals, or even politicians have always shown themselves to be ethical? Why people are unethical resonates from a number of societal factors which are of course way beyond the scope of this submission – and I'll leave it for others. However in our profession, there is no doubt at all, that the aforementioned vertically integrated business models has been the main culprit in enabling unethical practices.

So then, on the basis of no correlation between further academic study and ethics, let's talk about my skills & technical adeptness to advise the public on their financial matters, and therefore my academic completions and achievements to date.

In my over 20 years, I have undertaken pretty much all of the best and most technically respected study for Financial Planning that was both 'available' and 'relevant' at that time.

1998. Diploma of Financial Planning Deakin University. Why? Whilst applying for roles it was made very clear to me by most of the reputable employers and firms at the time, that I needed to complete - what was back then - the highly renowned Diploma of Financial Planning (Dip FP) through Deakin University in conjunction with the FPA. There simply wasn't any degree for financial planning back then. I repeat, there *wasn't* any degree for financial planning back then. Had there been, I would have simply transferred to that. So, I deferred my Bachelor of Business and began and completed all eight extensive units in order to attain my Dip FP – all paid for by myself. As is agreed on by pretty much all, it was quite a well-structured and comprehensive course that laid a very good foundation. It was a genuinely proper course, unlike the lamentable courses offered by various non-university & association providers in the subsequent years that followed, designed to just fast-track people through (thankfully this has all now been addressed).

2007. Certified Financial Planner (CFP): In 2000, I attained my first authorised representative status and began practicing. In wanting to then go back to complete my Bachelor of Business degree, the focus for the industry from an education standards point of view then shifted very heavily to attaining Certified Financial Planner (CFP) status. Rightly or wrongly this subsequently became the 'best practice' yardstick for not only employers, but the greater public who wanted a relationship with a financial planner. So as any professional wants to be considered and deemed best practice, I also paid for and completed the rigorous five unit program to attain my CFP status over the next few years. Of course.... my degree was still not completed, and by that stage, any valid deferral period was over (it would require a whole new start of the degree). Though at this next stage in life, starting another degree would've been extremely difficult, given I was busy working to save for a deposit on a home, newly married and first child on the way. Along with life starting on that very busy and hectic trajectory, it was also the case that I simply didn't need to complete my degree any longer. As here I was, fully licensed, well experienced, best practice status of CFP, loving my profession, and subsequently providing for my family. A degree was simply no longer required, and to dedicate any time to do so, would have been almost impossible to do at that time, given my responsibilities.

