

Otago Daily Times

Published on Otago Daily Times Online News (<http://www.odt.co.nz>)

GP defends obesity cartoon

By Elspeth McLean

Created 20/11/2009 - 05:58

Bulls general practitioner and author/illustrator Dave Baldwin wants people to take seriously his health messages about obesity, but says they need to keep their sense of humour about his illustrations too.

This follows criticism this week from Otago District Health Board member Judith Medlicott, about Dr Baldwin's cartoon (showing complications of obesity), which was to have been included in an Otago District Health Board report on obesity management.

Mrs Medlicott said the cartoon ridiculed fat people and was on a par with Nazi caricatures of Jews.

The illustration had since been removed from the report and an apology made to Mrs Medlicott.

In an email response to the *Otago Daily Times*, Dr Baldwin defended his illustration and said he was happy if it could help highlight the many diseases associated with obesity.

Board staff got permission to use the illustration after it was reproduced in the *Otago Daily Times* with an interview with Dr Baldwin in August.

Dr Baldwin said a Jewish lawyer friend he had consulted over the concerns was of the view Mrs Medlicott's attitude towards censorship would find far greater favour with Hitler's propaganda minister Dr Joseph Goebbels than "my humorous approach to improving people's health".

His friend felt the comparison drawn by Mrs Medlicott was "typical of the ignorant, overbearing attitudes of modern-day politically correct functionaries. He found her remarks offensive."

He said his most recent book, *Healthy Bastards*, had been written as a humorous non-politically correct book to "try and attract the huge percentage of our population who don't take on board health messages in our society".

Dr Baldwin said he had put a huge effort into promoting the book and the good health messages it



The cartoon which sparked the controversy.

contained, giving many men's health talks around the country.

Planning was under way to talk in prisons and anywhere else there may be a "large collection of `unhealthy bastards' to try and get them to mend their evil ways."

He hoped that when people read the book they would not only have a good laugh, but take on board some of the "very serious health messages that are intertwined within the book's non-PC humour".

He applauded good work by the staff concerned and other health workers trying to spread health messages.

elspeth.mclean@odt.co.nz [2]

Source URL (retrieved on 25/11/2009 - 11:57): <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/82735/gp-defends-obesity-cartoon>

Links:

[1] <http://www.odt.co.nz/>

[2] <http://www.odt.co.nz/>

© Allied Press Limited 2007. All the material on this page has the protection of international copyright. All rights reserved.