

Agency Management Committee

Meeting Number 23

8 March 2011

AHPRA, Level 7, 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne

Final decisions and actions arising

Members present

Mr Peter Allen

Mr Michael Gorton

Professor Genevieve Gray

Professor Con Michael

Professor Merrilyn Walton

In attendance

Mr Martin Fletcher - Chief Executive Officer

Mr John Ilott – Director, Operations

Mr Jim O’Dempsey - National Director, Business Improvement and Innovation

Mr Chris Robertson – Director, National Board Services

Ms Dominique Saunders – General Counsel

Mr Geoff Linton - Chair, Audit and Risk Committee (Part Two, Item 7.1)

Ms Fran Thorn – Secretary, Department of Health, Victoria (Part Two, Item 6)

Ms Jennifer McDonald – Director, Health Regulation & Reform, Department of Health, Victoria (Part Two, Item 6)

Ms Amanda Robinson - Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer, Minute Secretary

PART ONE

Item 1: Disclosure of any conflicts of interest in relation to agenda items

In accordance with Section 6(1) of Schedule 2 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2009* (the Act), members declare any possible conflict of interest in relation to agenda items for consideration by the Committee.

No conflicts of interest were advised by Members.

Item 2: Record of previous minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 were approved by the Committee as a true record of the meeting with amendments:

- Additional Paragraph -

Item 5.2 - 'The Agency Management Committee had an extensive discussion about gaps in current data about notifications, strategies to address this and agreed next steps.

The March meeting of the Management Committee will consider a further report on systems and processes for dealing with notifications.'

- Di Sisely's title be amended to 'Dr' rather than 'Ms'

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 3: Current Situation

Item 3.1: Update from Chair, CEO and Members

Mr Allen reported:

- The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council met in Hobart, Thursday 17 February 2011. Mr Allen and Mr Fletcher were in attendance.
- Ministers provided feedback on the progress of implementing the National Scheme within each of their jurisdictions
- Ministers requested that AHPRA progress reports be a standing item on future agendas and that AHPRA also provide periodic updates to the Chair of AHWMC.
- Ministers discussed additional short term assistance being provided to AHPRA with Victoria to take responsibility for coordinating this.
- Mr Allen, Mr Fletcher and Professor Michael will be meeting with Minister Hames, Wednesday 16 March 2011.

Mr Fletcher reported:

- In response to the request from Ministers a draft letter and documentation had been prepared identifying potential areas for short term assistance from governments. The proposed request included:
 - Assistance in facilitating workshops with health sector employers to improve understanding of new requirements of the National Scheme. In particular, AHPRA wants to target staff who assist International Medical Graduates to prepare/submit their applications, to reduce the proportion of incomplete applications (currently at around 60%).
 - Joint work with AHPRA State Office on registration process pathways for applicants. This can build on work initiated by Queensland Department of Health in conjunction with the AHPRA office in Queensland and Mercer.
 - Active promotion by health departments of renewal reminders to health practitioners and access to new opportunities to disseminate reminders, for example, employee pay slips and Medicare information.
 - Work with AHPRA State Offices to develop clear communication processes and escalation protocols to reduce multiple demands for information in relation to single applications.
 - Work with AHPRA to prioritise internationally qualified nursing applicants and assist those applicants to submit complete documentation (up to 90% incomplete currently).
 - Assistance in establishing expert panels for assessment of Nurse Practitioner applications and identify and make available suitable panel members.
 - Providing expert advice/consultancy to undertake a training needs analysis and work with AHPRA to take forward a Training Action Plan to embed implementation of standard operating protocols and improve national consistency.
 - Identification of additional capacity that AHPRA can access in the event that telephone response systems need to be rapidly scaled up at times of peak demand during major renewal periods.
 - Seconding additional staff to assist with data entry, document scanning and file creation and management. While AHPRA has already increased resources in this area, access to any additional resources would be well utilised.
 - Providing additional project management and ICT resources to allow work on improving external information exchange and reporting to be progressed over a shorter period of time; ideally within the next twelve months. Key targets are enhanced employer services, registrants, Medicare Australia and health departments.

- Service Improvements:
 - Outstanding renewal applications in NSW have now been processed with assistance from a special team based in Victoria.
- Communications:
 - The first edition of the AHPRA e-newsletter to stakeholders 'AHPRA Report' will be distributed this week.
- National Registers:
 - There have been improvements made to the presentation of information on the National Registers following feedback from stakeholders.
 - The registration expiry date has been removed from the summary record and now appears on the more detailed record (available on-line).
 - The existence of any endorsements, conditions, undertakings or reprimands are now showing on the summary record, with more information provided in the detailed record (available on-line).
 - Suburb and postcode details of principal place of practice are now available on-line
 - A note has been listed under the registration expiry date stating that the National Law allows practitioners to practice after the expiry date while their application is being assessed.
- Lapsing registrants:
 - 14 cases have been identified through the approved administrative process. These cases will have their new registration adjusted to commence immediately after their previous registration lapsed.
 - AHPRA is considering implementing a process allowing lapsed practitioners to submit a statutory declaration if they believe their renewal was adversely affected by an administrative deficiency on the part of AHPRA. This would be a one off arrangement in recognition of the transition to the scheme. The Management Committee supported such an arrangement within the requirements of the National Law.

The Committee discussed the updates and noted:

- There will be a follow up meeting with the NSW Department of Health, Monday 21 March 2011 to discuss any areas of ongoing concern, following a recent teleconference between Mr Allen and Prof. Deb Picone (Director-General, NSW Health).
- The Committee reinforced the importance of the May/June renewals as a top priority, ensuring resources are targeted to deal with any increased work load.
- The Committee supported the concept of a service charter and endorsed further work on this, with a view to consultation with stakeholders. The requirements of the National Law will be an important framework for this work.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 3.1.1: Management Calendar

Members noted the updated management calendar.

ACTION: Nil

Item 3.2: Action Update March 2011

The Committee considered the March action update noting:

Action Item 1:

- \$2.408 million has been received from Western Australia, week commencing 7 March 2011. This represents the transfer of reserves from 6 WA practitioner boards.
- There will need to be discussion with AHMAC about payment for additional work in relation to the later entry of Western Australia to the National Scheme.

Action Item 7:

- The first meeting of the joint working party took place between representatives of Accreditation Councils, 3 National Board Chairs, along with AHPRA staff.
- The working party is reviewing the quality and reporting framework documents which will accompany the legal agreement between Councils and AHPRA, in the context of the Health Profession Agreements with each of the National Boards.
- The final documents created by the working party will be considered by National Boards, Professional Councils and the Management Committee in April.
- A national meeting is scheduled for 7 June 2011 involving all Board Chairs, AHPRA and Accreditation Councils.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 4: Performance Reporting and Risk Management

Item 4.1: Operational Update

The Committee noted the report on activity levels during January and February 2011.

In relation to student registration, it was noted:

- That an additional FAQ will be added to the website, outlining processes for student registration and the information required.
- Committee members emphasised the importance of ongoing communication with educational providers, outlining the process for student registrations.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 4.2: Business Improvement Update

The Committee considered the progress on agreed Business Improvement priorities noting that future reports will capture data on Finance and ICT improvements projects that are currently underway.

Further data on the renewal campaign underway will be provided at the April meeting.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 4.3: Enquiries and Contact Centre Update

Mr O'Dempsey provided an update on the Enquiries and Contact Centre.

Members considered the recommendations of the report and noted:

- The progressive changes being made to AHPRA's enquiry contact centre staffing and process flows.
- The continued implementation of state based call handling given the improvement to customer contact experience since the changes have been implemented in ACT, NT, SA, TAS, QLD and WA.
- The initiatives being implemented, for example through improved online services, to address common reasons for phone calls and to reduce the volume of calls.
- Communication material encouraging early online renewals will be circulated to members.

Committee members sought additional information on the methodology for validating predictions about call volumes and the risk mitigation plans in place to deal with increased call volumes in relation to the May/June renewal period.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 5: Items for Information

Item 5.1: Key Issues from February Board Meetings

Mr Robertson updated the Committee on key issues arising from the February Board meetings:

- State and Territory boards
 - Recommendations are being made to Ministers on proposed changes in size and composition of state and territory boards, prior to advertising vacancies.
 - The Medical, Nursing and Midwifery and Physiotherapy Boards of Australia have proposed some sizing adjustments for operational effectiveness.
 - The Psychology Board of Australia has made adjustments to some of their regional boards.
 - The Dental Board of Australia's preference is to not have State or Territory boards after 30 June 2011 and instead to have a national committee. The Board made this decision based on the reduced workload, since transition, of the State and Regional Boards. The national Registration and Notification Committee of the Dental Board of Australia and the Registration and Notification

Committees in each state and territory are currently managing and would continue to manage registration and notification matters in relation to dental practitioners.

- A small project team has been established to lead the work on Board appointments working across National and State offices, in partnership with governments
- National Board succession planning will be prioritised once the state and territory boards have been finalised.

ACTION: AHPRA

Item 5.2

The Committee endorsed the National Registration & Accreditation Scheme Strategy 2011-2014.

ACTION: AHPRA