

Professions Reference Group communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met via video conference on Wednesday 8 November 2023.

Acting Chief Executive - verbal update

Ahpra and National Boards Annual Report 2022/23

The annual report was submitted to the Ministerial Council on 27 September. A briefing webinar for jurisdictions was held on 19 October and the annual report was tabled in the Victorian parliament and the report will be published on Thursday 9 November 2023.

Complaints checklist

Ahpra, National Boards and the Commission have published a [checklist tool for practitioners managing feedback and complaints](#), to support practitioners when resolving a complaint made directly to the health provider. This jointly branded resource with the Commission incorporates feedback from relevant internal and external stakeholders and practitioner user testing. The checklist was published on 2 November 2023 with a news item and shared with stakeholders and is also being promoted through social media and National Board newsletters.

The Commission is leading work to develop resources for consumers to provide them with practical guidance and tips about the process of making a health complaint in Australia, including information about where to go to make a complaint and the role of different complaint-handling organisations. The initial resource being developed is an animation for consumers.

Work also continues to progress on changes to Ahpra's existing complaints webpage to improve navigation for consumers and practitioners in the context of the wider website redesign, with initial updates to the "Raise a concern page" intended to be published in November 2023.

Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings (Kruk Review)

The Independent review of Health Practitioner regulatory settings final report was not tabled at the last meeting of National Cabinet. It is anticipated it will be tabled with National Cabinet in the first week of December.

National Cabinet scope of practice review

[Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce](#) is an independent review, led by Professor Mark Cormack. It will look at evidence about health professionals' ability to deliver on their full scope of practice in primary care.

The review will identify opportunities to remove the barriers stopping health professionals working to their full scope of practice. It will also look for examples of multi-disciplinary teams working together at the top of their scope of practice to deliver best practice primary care.

Professor Cormack has met with chairs of National Boards last week and confirmed the approach to be taken with their scheduled meeting confirmed for 14 November.

Health Strategy Unit CLEAR award

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit (the HSU) recently received a 2023 [Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation](#) Regulatory Excellence Award for its anti-racism and cultural safety work.

Jayde Fuller, National Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit, received the Award in Utah, USA at the end of September, on behalf of the team. In accepting the award, Jayde recognised the team's collective work developing culturally safe healthcare and anti-racism policies.

Expert Advisory Group on practitioner distress

There continues to be considerable interest in our work both within Australia and internationally. Ahpra met with the Medical Council of Ireland to exchange our perspectives on kindness in regulation and they have asked Ahpra to speak on the topic compassionate regulation at a future training day.

The paper on the EAG research for the peer-reviewed journal, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, has been published [here](#).

Landmark ruling over discriminatory and offensive behaviour

We produced a media release on the recent outcome of the landmark case [MBA vs CDA](#) (suppressed) tribunal decision involving Dr Kris Rallah-Baker (a guest panellist at our [workforce webinar series](#) in 2022) the first case involving racism since the legislative amendments passed in October 2022 prioritising cultural safety and eliminating racism.

Regulatory Operations update

The graduate campaign is underway, and applications are coming in exactly as forecasted which is aligned with our resource forecasting. All allied health renewals are also underway with no issues. The registration function is performing very strongly and the average timeline to assess and complete an application has reduced by 19 days in the last 12 months.

The public consultation on two further possible changes to the National Boards' English language skills requirements has closed in September and work is underway on the analysing the feedback and preparing a draft for National Boards to consider before going to Ministers for approval.

Transformation Program update

Business Transformation Program is a time limited (4-5 year) project, and we are in the final stages of building our business processes for the Salesforce platform. We are moving to a genuine online registration application process which is what professions have been looking for. We are expecting to go live in the new calendar year.

Review of COVID19 vaccination position statement

Members noted the update on the review of Ahpra and National Boards' position statement Registered health practitioners and students and COVID-19 vaccination (the position statement) and noted that Ahpra and National Boards have agreed to retire the position statement and replace the statement with some explanation and general FAQs, which will be circulated to the Professions Reference Group and key stakeholders around mid-November and published by the end of November.

The next meeting of the PRG is confirmed for Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Julianne Bryce

Chair

Professions Reference Group