

Professions Reference Group Communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met via video conference on Wednesday 10 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by Nello Marino from the Australian Podiatry Association.

The Professions Reference Group discussed the following.

- Ahpra is moving to close the pandemic response sub-register and practitioners are encouraged to stay registered by applying to move to the main register. Discussions with jurisdictions are about what might be needed to support the national vaccination rollout which is continuing to take shape. Update: At the request of the Australian Government, the sub-register was extended to 5 April 2022 for medical practitioners, nurses, midwives and pharmacists on the sub-register who have registration limited to practise for the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.
- The National Boards and Ahpra have published a [joint statement](#) to help registered health practitioners and students understand what's expected of them in giving, receiving and advising on and sharing information about COVID-19 vaccination.
- The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety includes two recommendations relevant to the National Scheme which propose national registration for personal care workers (health) or assistants in nursing and the establishment of an accreditation authority to develop and review accreditation standards for the mandatory minimum qualification (certificate III). Ahpra and National Boards will be informed by the decisions of the Australian Government in response to the Commission's recommendations.
- Psychology and Pharmacy Board Chairs made a written submission and appeared before a panel of the Disability Royal Commission to speak about the issues associated with cognitive disability and cognitive impairment.
- The Medical Board's Medical Training Survey recently concluded with concerning data about bullying and harassment in the workplace, an issue which may not be specific to medicine but is also relevant across several professions.
- The jurisdictional National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Project team has issued materials to support targeted consultation with key stakeholders on draft amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and National Law Regulation.
- Last year's push for early applications from new graduates of selected professions worked well to support the smooth arrival pattern of applications and enable achievement of published timeframes for all application categories. The response clearly showed that early communication helps to manage large volumes of applications during peak times.
- Operation Reset is focused on targeted notifications work to accelerate the adoption of the risk assessment and controls framework in investigations. This work involved over 200 training sessions for staff and delegates, communication with stakeholders about what the risk assessment and control framework looks like, and the role of reflective practice conversations in the assessment of continuing risk.
- A special [Taking care podcast episode: Un-learning and re-learning the meaning of 26 January](#) was published about 26 January (Australia Day) as Ahpra and the National Boards strive to embed cultural safety in the health system.
- Ahpra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Training Program is being rolled out to 1,400 Ahpra staff, National Board and committee members in 2021.

- Ahpra's second reconciliation action plan, which sits under the National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Culture Safety Strategy 2020-2025, will be launched soon. Members will be informed closer to the date.

Other business

The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

Nello Marino

Chair
Professions Reference Group