



Community Advisory Council communique

M4 / 2021

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) met online.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands where members were located for the meeting and paid their respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

CEO update

Mr Fletcher provided an update on the launch of the 2021 sub-register. It includes approximately 30,000 health practitioners from 12 professions who had left practicing registration within the past twelve months and other criteria. The sub-register is a response to jurisdictional health system workforce needs. Mr Fletcher highlighted a number of other factors affecting the health workforce at the moment, including that difficulties for overseas trained health practitioners coming to Australia Members sought to confirm that the 2021 sub-register doesn't include any practitioners who were subject to notifications at the time they left practicing registration. Mr Fletcher confirmed that was the case and also that practitioners who are no longer in Australia have not been included.

Members raised the issue of a specific case and raised questions about when notifications should be made by employers. Mr Fletcher said that employers as well as registered health practitioners may have a mandatory reporting obligation to notify Ahpra if they are concerned about the conduct of a practitioner.

Workshop: Subcommittee arrangements

Members formally adopted the revised Terms of reference, noting the Agency Management Committee had endorsed the revised Terms of reference at their most recent meeting.

The revised Terms of reference permit the CAC to 'choose to convene a subcommittee to discuss and provide input into National Board standards, codes, guidelines, policies, publications and other specific issues.' Ms Williams and Ms Davies led a workshop that asked members to consider their approach to convening subcommittees. Members noted the importance of aligning well with existing Scheme structures and noted that while members current participation on working groups and committees had helped raise the community voice within the Scheme, convening subcommittees may provide an opportunity for the CAC to elevate the community voice in a more structured and influential way.

Members agreed:

- central to determining how best to convene subcommittees is an understanding of where decisions are made and how the CAC can best influence and play a relevant and meaningful part
- a staged approach to convening subcommittees would be best and resourcing would need to be considered, and
- a priority issue for the CAC is the consumer perspective on the notifications process and requested, in order to inform their thinking on convening subcommittees, a briefing on management of notifications, groups currently working on the notifications process, and opportunities for the CAC to be represented in the notifications process improvement work and/or groups.

Ahpra's revised Privacy Policy

Ms Giuliani provided some background to the work to update Ahpra's Privacy policy. The work follows recommendations from the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commission's *Review of confidentiality safeguards for people making notifications about health practitioners*. The report

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recommended updating various public facing statements. Now that those steps have been taken, Ahpra's Privacy policy has been updated to address the final recommendation and to ensure that the Privacy policy is consistent with Ahpra's privacy obligations and procedures.

Members had some questions about how freedom of information requests would be managed under the policy, especially how it relates to anonymous or confidential notifications. Members suggested providing information about how privacy will be managed at the beginning of making a notification, including under what circumstances information will be released.

2021 Sub-register

Mr Lord updated the CAC on the launch of the 2021 pandemic sub-register, outlining that the sub-register responds to anticipated pressures on the health workforce arising from the current COVID-19 outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria. Factors compounding on the health workforce include delays with student graduation, furloughing of hospital staff, delays with international medical graduates and nurses getting into the country and delays due to quarantine requirements when they do arrive.

Access for all project

Ms Biggar update the CAC on progress with the accessibility work with multilingual resources now published and translation and interpreting services now available. The work has focused on what to do if you're looking for a practitioner and what to do if you have concerns about a practitioner.

The next steps focus on who would find it difficult to access Ahpra and the National Boards, who is challenged in interacting with us, who would find interacting with us a threatening or unsafe space. Ms Biggar advised that the workshops with National Executive had identified priority groups and focus groups across those communities are underway.

Accreditation Committee

Mr Vayani provided an update on the Accreditation Committee noting that the Committee has a sizable agenda across all professions, looking at curriculum content and accreditation requirements, and of interest to the CAC is the Committee's consideration of what constitutes a consumer i.e. a patient or for example an organisation that employs graduates.

Notifier Support Steering Committee

Ms Chivers provided an update on the Notifier Support Service, advising that the two social worker positions have now been filled and both positions have started with the incumbents in a learning phase.

CRG/CAC appearance at the Senate Inquiry

Ms Hall read her statement to be delivered at the Senate Inquiry into the administration of registration and notifications by the Ahpra and related entities under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

Tasmanian health consumer focus groups

Ms Griggs provided an update on the stakeholder focus groups she'd been conducting with the Ahpra State Manager for Tasmania. She said the forums were a good reminder about the varying levels of literacy – health as well as technology literacy – across the community.

Mark Bodycoat

Chair
Community Reference Group