

Professions Reference Group communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met via video conference on Tuesday 8 November 2022. The meeting was chaired by Nello Marino from the Australian Podiatry Association.

The PRG discussed the following:

Chief Executive - verbal update

National Cabinet submission on health workforce

First Ministers agreed to progress 'a suite of projects proposed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority' to streamline and accelerate the assessment and recognition of health practitioners. First Ministers also agreed to undertake an independently led 'rapid' review of regulatory settings for both Australian and overseas trained health professionals, to report back to National Cabinet in early 2023.

Cosmetic surgery update

On 1 September 2022 we published the final report of the independent review into the regulation of medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery.

To support the launch of the report, we subsequently published a range of supporting materials on our website including the full report, details on Ahpra's and the MBA's full response to the review, our welcoming of the support of Health Ministers for cosmetic surgery reform, the launch of the cosmetic surgery hotline and links to the 203 consultation submissions we received.

Transformation Program

Members noted the Transformation Program is progressing the need for us to create a safe transition from our old systems and processes to a newer and more efficient platform with the target of mid next year to go live. Members agreed it would be very useful to receive updates at each PRG meeting prior to the go live date in 2023 as a standing agenda item.

National law amendments

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 received assent on Friday 21 October 2022 in Queensland.

The first set of amendments in effect are listed on our National Law amendments webpage and include:

- the introduction of a new paramount principle that public protection and public confidence in the safety of health services are the paramount considerations for administering the National Law
- the introduction of a new guiding objective and principle acknowledging our role in ensuring the development of a culturally safe and respectful health workforce that is responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and contributes to the elimination of racism in health services.
- increases in the maximum penalties for breaches to the advertising provisions of the National Law.
- change of the name of the Agency Management Committee to Ahpra Board

Other items

2023 Graduate campaign

The graduate campaign for 2023 is underway and applications are being assigned and completed in five days and by mid-December (when results are received) we can expect applications to be finalised. Members were requested to reach out to any student graduates they may know in their respective professions and encourage them to complete their applications as quickly as possible.

Allied Health renewal period

The Allied Health renewal period is progressing smoothly with no issues being raised so far.

International registration

Work is continuing on streamlining international registration processes and the Registration function has committed additional resources to the international stream.

Cosmetic surgery enforcement unit

The Cosmetic surgery enforcement unit has been operational within the Regulatory Operations directorate of Ahpra since the first week of September 2022.

Public consultation on a draft data strategy

A public consultation on the draft Data strategy is planned to commence in November 2022 and remain open through the summer period until late January 2023. The consultation will be promoted on the Ahpra website and social media platforms. In addition, health system and profession-specific stakeholders will be informed of the consultation through targeted emails. It is envisioned information sessions will be held during the consultation period to enable stakeholders, practitioners and members of the public to ask questions and better understand the data concepts proposed in the draft Data strategy.

Nello Marino

Chair

Professions Reference Group