

Communiqué: Chinese Medicine Board of Australia Meeting with professional associations February 2023

The fourth annual meeting of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (the Board) with the Chinese medicine professional associations was held following the first Board meeting of the year on 21 February 2023.

The Board considers regular information exchange with professional associations an essential component of its communication and engagement strategy. It is expected that such meetings will further strengthen constructive relationships with the Board's key stakeholders to assist the Board in delivering its regulatory outcomes in an engaging, effective and efficient manner. In addition, such meetings also provide an opportunity to share information and explore issues/matters of mutual interest and respond respectfully, collaboratively and proactively.

In attendance were:

**Professional Association representatives
(In alphabetical order of the organisations)**

Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association (AACMA)	Ms Waveny Holland
Australian Natural Therapists Association (ANTA)	Mr Paul Stadhams
Australian Traditional Medicine Society (ATMS)	Ms Kaitlin Edin
Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Society of Australia Ltd (CMASA)	Mr Tino D'Angelo
Chinese Medicine Industry Council (CMIC)	Mr Bradley McEwan
Federation of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Societies of Australia (FCMA)	Ms Christine Pope
	Dr Guoqing Wei
	Dr Qiu Dong Wang
	Dr Max Ma
	Mr Yifan Yang
	Hon. Prof. Tzi Chiang Lin
	Dr Kevin Chang

Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

Adjunct Professor Danform Lim, Chair and practitioner member
Ms Sophy Athan (virtual attendance), community member
Mr David Brereton, community member
Ms Stephanie Campbell, community member
Mr Luke Hubbard, practitioner member
Mr Roderick Martin, practitioner member
Ms Johannah Shergis, practitioner member
Ms Bing Tian, practitioner member
Ms Dina Tsiopelas, practitioner member

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)

Ms Kirsten Hibberd, Acting Executive Officer (Chinese medicine)
Ms Lesley Havers, Board Support, Ahpra
Mr Jonathan Longley, Senior Policy and Project Officer (Chinese Medicine)
Ms Jilleta Mitchell, Senior Policy and Project Officer (Chinese Medicine)
Mr Nick Lord, National Director, Engagement and Government Relations, Ahpra (virtual attendance) – item 4.0 only



1. Welcome by the Chair

All members were welcomed to the meeting.

1.1 Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Professor Lim acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands from where participants attended the meeting and paid respects to Elders past and present and emerging.

1.2 Introduction to the Board, Association representatives and new staff

Following introductions of Board members and Association representatives, the Chair also introduced the Acting Executive Officer, Kirsten Hibberd, Board Support Officer, Lesley Havers and two new Board staff, Senior Policy and Project Officers, Jonathan Longley and Jilleta Mitchell, to attendees. The Chair also refreshed Professional Association representatives on the purpose of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) and the functions of the Board.

2. Presentation – Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

2.1 Key statistics

The Chair presented a number of key statistics to attendees, including:

- registration type by principal place of practice (as of September 2022),
- registrations by divisions and principal place of practice (as of September 2022), and
- the number of students in approved Chinese Medicine programs (as of June 2021).

The number of students in approved programs was noted as having increased by 22.5 per cent since 2017-18; however, it was noted that the overall number of Chinese Medicine practitioners was not increasing at the same rate as other allied health professions regulated under the National Scheme.

2.2 The role of the Board and the role of Professional Associations

The Chair reminded attendees of the role of both the Board and the Professional Associations so that attendees clearly understood what they could ask of the Board and how the two might work together for the greater good of the profession.

The Board's role:

- The Board is restricted by its roles and responsibilities under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). The Board's primary role is to protect the public and set standards and policies that Chinese medicine practitioners must meet.
- To provide information as required by the government as to registration and regulation of the profession, and the Board liaises with the government on these issues.

The Board's role is not:

- to advocate for the profession, however, the Board can provide information on education and registration standards and practitioners' professional obligations when there is a need or at request.

The role of Professional Associations is to:

- advocate for and advance the profession.
- provide valuable support for members.
- develop and deliver continuing professional development programs.

2.3 Update on the Board's work plan

The Chair gave an update on the Board's work plan:

- Guideline reviews currently underway:
 - Safe Chinese herbal medicine practice
 - Following preliminary and public consultation, expected to be finalised and published in mid-2023.
 - Contamination prevention and control for acupuncture practice
 - Currently under consideration by the Board following a public consultation held in 2022.
 - Patient Health Records
 - A review of this guideline has commenced, and preliminary consultation with key stakeholders is expected to occur in 2023.
- Work continues on the Board's regulatory examinations to support the assessment of applications for general registration from applicants who hold non-Board approved qualifications.
- The Board continues to engage with practitioners and students through:
 - newsletters,
 - webinars, and
 - presentations.
- As part of a significant refresh to the Ahpra and National Board's website, the Board has launched an updated website in February 2023.

2.6 Board communications

The Chair reiterated that the Board could be contacted via the details on the Board's website, where individuals may also access a translating or interpreting service if required. Professional associations are welcome to contact the Board's Executive Officer directly.

3. Matters referred to the CMBA for discussion by the Professional Associations

3.1 Allied health, NDIS, DVA and Medicare Provider Number

There is no agreed definition of what encompasses 'allied health'. This will be determined by who is doing the grouping and for what purpose, and it may differ within the same government department. The National Law does not contain a definition of allied health and is designed to provide for the registration of health practitioners within regulated health professions.

The Board Chair and Ahpra staff have had dialogue with representatives from the National Disability Insurance Agency, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and the Department of Health and Aged Care (Commonwealth) to discuss collaborative models of care and the Chinese Medicine contribution to these models.

3.2 Endorsement for acupuncture under the National Law

The National Law, under section 97, limits the use of the title 'Acupuncturist' to practitioners registered in the Chinese medicine division of Acupuncturists or to practitioners who have been endorsed by their respective Board as Acupuncturists. Currently, only the Medical Board has in place the processes to endorse registered

medical practitioners as Acupuncturists, which includes the completion of a relevant and acceptable qualification.

4 Presentation – How Ahpra engages with other regulators and agencies

Attendees received a presentation from Nick Lord, National Director, Engagement and Government Relations (Ahpra) on Ahpra's approach to communicating and interacting with Government and other regulators and agencies.

5 Meeting review and future planning

It was agreed that these meetings were useful and informative. Professional associations suggested future meetings are longer to enable greater discussion.

5 Next meeting

To be advised