

## Terms of reference

### Consumer Health Complaints Reference Group

#### Context

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) have started work on a project to explore whether there are opportunities through their work to improve the consumer experience of making a health complaint in Australia.

This project responds to feedback provided to Ahpra from consumers who have experienced the health complaints system, which suggests many were dissatisfied with their experience. Common reasons for this dissatisfaction include difficulty working out where to make a complaint, long timeframes for resolution, and being unhappy with the outcome.

The Commission and Ahpra have initiated this work together because they are both agencies working across the system with governance frameworks that support consultation with all jurisdictions.

Early discussions between the Commission and Ahpra identified opportunities for joint work include to:

- better understand consumers' experience of health care complaints in the general and mental healthcare sector and identify any opportunities for the Commission and Ahpra to improve the consumer experience
- better understand the health provider experience of health care complaints and identify any opportunities for the Commission and Ahpra to support complaints management at the local health provider level.

#### Purpose of the Reference Group

The consumer health complaints reference group (the reference group) has been established to provide advice and guidance on the planned joint work, including on project processes and deliverables, areas for further work and collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

#### Terms of Reference

The reference group will provide advice and guidance on:

1. the overall direction of the project and its activities
2. approaches for joint action under the project and the best ways to achieve these
3. the stakeholder engagement strategy for the project

4. mapping health complaints options available to consumers
5. identifying any opportunities to improve the consumer experience of the complaint system, working in partnership with consumers
6. identifying related work on health complaints, and potential areas for new work relevant to the project's goals
7. approaches to deliverables agreed as part of the project, and
8. identifying and managing the risks associated with the project.

## Membership

The reference group includes:

### Co-chairs

- Dr Heather Buchan, Senior Medical Advisor, the Commission
- Mr Martin Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer, Ahpra

### Members

- Mr Brett Simmonds, Forum of NRAS Chairs
- Dr Danielle McMullen, Australian Medical Association
- Ms Jacqui Gibson-Roos, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy Group, Ahpra
- Ms Jo Root, Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- Ms Patricia Hall, Community Advisory Council, Ahpra
- Ms Sam Smith, Health Consumers' Council (WA)
- Ms Pip Brennan, Consumer representative
- Ms Barbara Yeoh, Ahpra Board

### Secretariat services

Secretariat will be provided by Ahpra.

## Meetings and procedures

### Frequency of meetings

The reference group meetings will be scheduled quarterly over the next 12 months as work on the agreed deliverables progresses with an anticipated end date of December 2023.

Meetings will be held virtually (via Zoom) unless agreed in advance by Ahpra and/or the Commission.

### Procedures for meetings

A Co-Chair is to preside at a meeting of the reference group. The Co-Chairs will agree who is to preside at each meeting.

Materials will be provided to members at least five working days before the meeting, noting that the purpose of the reference group is to make timely decisions to avoid project delays. A brief report of the meeting will be drafted and circulated to members. Once the record of meetings is confirmed, updates will be provided to key stakeholder groups identified in the project and communications plan including jurisdictions, health complaints bodies in each jurisdiction, consumer organisations and professional associations.

## Quorum and proxies

A quorum of the reference group is five members, including at least one Co-Chair. Due to the expert nature of the group, proxies cannot be accepted without prior agreement. In cases where the member cannot attend the Secretariat will make arrangement to seek feedback out of session.

## Reporting

The reference group will report to Ahpra and the Commission.

## Payment and expenses

Members representing Ahpra's Community Advisory Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy Group will be paid in accordance with Ahpra business rules for these groups. Other members will not be paid to attend meetings unless otherwise agreed.

## Travel

When permitted, any travel required for meetings will be arranged for members. Any travel and accommodation will not be funded unless agreed in advance by Ahpra and/or the Commission.

## Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest

On occasions confidential information may be provided to members. A confidentiality undertaking seeks to ensure that there is a mechanism for the management of confidential material to be provided to members, such as material marked confidential, or where the reference group Co-Chairs direct that a matter or item of information is to be treated as confidential by members.

Processes to manage any potential or actual conflicts of interest will be addressed at all reference group meetings.

## Timeframe

The Ahpra and the Commission will review the role of the reference group and its membership as required with an agreed end review date of December 2023.

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<b>Next review</b>	End 2023 prior to anticipated end date