



Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Health Practice  
Chinese Medicine  
Chiropractic  
Dental  
Medical  
Medical Radiation Practice  
Nursing and Midwifery  
Occupational Therapy  
Optometry  
Osteopathy  
Pharmacy  
Physiotherapy  
Podiatry  
Psychology

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

## Attachment One: Response to questions on notice

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23 December 2013

### Legal and social issues legislation committee

#### Question on notice

What is the scope of work the Community Reference Group has been providing in relation to providing feedback to with respect to health practitioner regulation?

#### Response

The Community Reference Group (CRG) has been established to provide AHPRA with feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better community knowledge about health practitioner regulation and to advise on how to better understand and respond to community needs. The CRG will not be involved in decisions about or the management of individual matters. Rather, it will work with AHPRA and National Boards to improve the transparency and accessibility of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme to health consumers and the wider community.

The CRG has identified notifications management, the experience of notifiers and the information available to consumers and the community about notifications as their priority areas of interest. The CRG is currently reviewing the *Guide for notifiers* published earlier in 2013 to help the community understand how we manage notifications in the National Scheme and is giving AHPRA advice about how to improve the information given to notifiers. Future work includes a review of AHPRA standard correspondence 'templates' with notifiers.

The CRG is also providing feedback on AHPRA's *Service charter*, has asked its contacts in the community to join our online community of interest; is reviewing and providing feedback on the National Boards' consultation on registration standards for criminal history and English language skills; and set up a framework for advising National Boards on the codes, guidelines, policies and standards they set for practitioners to help protect the public.

#### Background

Following a series of community forums throughout Australia, AHPRA established the Community Reference Group in May 2013 and the group held its first meeting in June 2013. This is the first time a national group of this kind, with a focus on health practitioner regulation, has been established in Australia. The group is independently chaired by a community member of a National Board.

While the group is a conduit between communities and AHPRA and National Boards, it is not designed to be representative of particular communities. Rather, members of the group represent only themselves and share their opinions and consumer expertise as individuals.

Members are listed on the [Community Reference Group Members page](#) of our website and Communiqués from the group's meetings are published on the [Communiqués page](#) after each of its meetings. See [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

## Question on notice

What are the details of the partnership with the Health Issues Centre?

## Response

The partnership with the Health Issues Centre aims to improve consumer experience of the joint consideration process between the Health Services Commissioner and AHPRA. The project will advise on specific actions AHPRA can take to increase public confidence in the joint consideration process of consumer complaints between the HSC and AHPRA. The Health Issues Centre will work with the Community Reference Group on this project, as well as establishing processes to ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved.

AHPRA and the Health Issues Centre are currently finalising the detailed scope and funding requirements of work to be undertaken in this project. As part of this scoping, discussion has taken place with the Community Reference Group. The project will have two stages, issues identification and development of action proposals.

Issues to be addressed include:

- **Communication and language:** How clear is the information about what each organisation does? What do consumers understand about the reasons some complaints/ notifications are dealt with by the HSC and some by AHPRA and how can this be clearer? How well does each organisation communicate and engage with consumers in this process? Is the language used appropriate for responding to consumers who have initiated a complaint or notification?
- **Good systems:** Are the systems in place to manage notifications effectively and in a timely way? Are the right resources in place to do the job well?
- **Public confidence:** How confident are consumers that the process they are involved in is fair, timely and reasonable (even if they don't get the outcome they initially wanted)? How is the role of consumers as notifiers managed for consumers?
- **Transparency:** How transparent is the process of joint consideration and how can the public know that decisions made support the public interest?
- **Quality and system improvement:** How can learning from complaints/notifications for wider system improvements be strengthened?
- **Consumer experience:** How can issues of loss of lack of consumer 'control' over the joint consideration process be addressed?

Martin Fletcher

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency