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SUBMISSION TO

**SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

FROM

**CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(NATIONAL) LIMITED**

REGARDING

**Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner
registration by the Australian Health Practitioner
Regulation Agency (AHPRA)**

14 April 2011

Submitted by:

**Krystina Brown
Chief Executive Officer**

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia (National) Limited (CAA) makes the following submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee regarding the Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

Due to the pressure to meet deadlines imposed by the government in the implementation of the national registration and accreditation scheme, it is understandable that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) would experience some problems.

Indeed, it was accepted at the outset that AHPRA would have to jump significant hurdles in order to successfully transition 520,000 practitioner registrations from eight state and territory schemes into one national scheme.

It has been CAA's experience that AHPRA has achieved well in its new role, however this has not been without some problems occurring during the transitioning into the new scheme.

For chiropractors there were specific problems in regard to renewal of registration in the states of Victoria and Queensland. With chiropractors in Queensland problems were encountered in switching between dealing with AHPRA head office staff and the staff at the Queensland office of AHPRA.

Health professionals and patients have unfortunately been disadvantaged along the way. The CAA sees a necessity for any problems still in existence to be resolved as quickly as possible.

Recommendation:

The CAA recommends to the Inquiry that AHPRA be assisted in whatever way is necessary to immediately rectify any outstanding issues relating to registration.

CAA has been actively involved since 2006 in the lead-up to the commencement of the new scheme in June 2010. CAA's Chief Executive Officer was a member of the Professions Reference Group (PRG) which consisted of representation from the 10 registered health professions to be transitioned into the new scheme.

The PRG proved to be a useful conduit for COAG and their representatives to communicate directly with the professions and for the professions to provide helpful feedback into the development of the national registration and accreditation scheme. It was also an opportunity to express the differences between each profession and how these impacted on decisions taken by government in order to streamline the design and implementation of the new scheme.

The PRG was abandoned upon the commencement of the scheme, although members continued to consult as a group amongst themselves, discussing issues affecting their health professionals resulting from the scheme.

It was not until 21 February, 2011 that the Professions Reference Group reconvened officially at the invitation of Mr Martin Fletcher, CEO of AHPRA.

It is CAA's view that the administrative problems surrounding the renewal process could have been diminished or completely avoided had AHPRA collectively engaged with the professions at an earlier stage than the 21 February 2011 meeting in Sydney.

The CAA believes that the PRG has been an effective consultation and communication forum for the registered professions and that the continuation of the information exchange within a formal advisory committee to the staff of AHPRA would be valuable for all concerned.

Recommendation:

The CAA strongly recommends to the Inquiry that AHPRA establishes a formal advisory committee of the current registered professions, and those professions soon to enter the scheme, to regularly discuss issues related to the ongoing administration of national registration and accreditation. Essentially this formal advisory committee would be an expansion of the Professions Reference Group.

The CAA appreciates the opportunity to provide this feedback to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee and looks forward to seeing the outcomes of the report of this Inquiry.
