



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

23 March 2017

Senator Rachel Siewert
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator

Additional information arising from the public hearing of 17 March 2017 for the inquiry into the Complaints mechanism administered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is aware of questions that were raised by members of the Community Affairs References Committee (the Committee) at the public hearing on 17 March 2017, and wishes to provide information related to those queries that may assist the work of the Committee. Specifically, we seek to address queries relating to the registration fees for registered nurses and midwives, and the current recruitment activity occurring for various State and Territory Boards of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

Registration fees for nurses and midwives

In noting the proposed amendment to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) to recognise nursing and midwifery as two separate professions, Senator Xenophon questioned whether practitioners who are registered as a nurse and a midwife are required to pay two separate fees for registration in these professions.

A practitioner who holds dual registration as a nurse and midwife is only required to pay one annual registration fee, which is currently \$150 per annum. There is no intention to change these arrangements should the proposed amendment to recognise nursing and midwifery as separate professions be adopted in the National Law.

Current recruitment activity occurring for various State and Territory Boards of the National Scheme

Senator Di Natale asked a question regarding turnover in Board membership, noting that recent advertising indicated large numbers of positions were available on Boards such as the Tasmanian Board of the Medical Board of Australia.

Appointments to State and Territory Boards such as the Tasmanian Board are made by the Health Minister in the State and Territory in which the Board operates. AHPRA's role in the process is to assist Health Ministers in the process of appointing members, including the advertising of vacancies. Appointments are for a period of up to three years, and appointed members may apply for re-appointment for a further term (noting that all eligibility requirements to be a Board member must continue to be met).

Vacancies generally arise due to scheduled expiry of the terms of members. Public advertising of vacancies (which is required by the National Law) occurs as an open call for applications.

In the case of the current recruitment to vacancies for the various Boards, there has been no "spill" of positions or mass resignations that have led to the current round of recruitment. Health Ministers have determined that all vacancies for State and Territory Boards in 2017 be dealt with in one recruitment campaign. AHPRA understands the decision was made on the grounds that:

- a single campaign encourages a competitive field of candidates for the role of Board member
- Ministers can assess all recommended candidates from the recruitment process and achieve the best possible composition of the Board (which may include the retention of experienced Board members whilst encouraging new members with diverse skills and experience to join the Board), and
- a single recruitment campaign is more efficient with respect to time and resources.

Other matters from the public hearing of 17 March 2017

AHPRA is aware that the other evidence provided at the public hearing of 17 March 2017 may lead to further questions from the Committee for AHPRA. Please do not hesitate to contact us should the Committee have further questions or requests for information.

Yours sincerely

Martin Fletcher

Chief Executive Officer

CC: *Ms Kym Peake, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria and Chair, Health Workforce Principal Committee*