

Secretariat  
Standing Committee on Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Inquiry into the medical complaints process in Australia  
Parliament House, Canberra  
ACT 2600  
Via Email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Secretariat

**Re: Question/s taken on notice, Public Hearing, 1 November 2016, Sydney Senate Community Affairs References Committee, Inquiry into the medical complaints process in Australia**

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear as witness at the public hearing of the Senate Inquiry on 1 November 2016 in Sydney. At that hearing AIDA took two questions on notice which we will respond to below as questions A and B. We note that these questions are recorded as *Question: 1, Hansard page reference: 33* in the Hansard extract.

**Question A**

**Dr Armstrong:** From our survey we know that only about 40 per cent of our members have initiated some sort of complaint reconciliation, and not all of those were formal complaints, although the majority were. They said that the vast majority of those complaints were ignored or not actioned, and they often had negative repercussions, which discouraged them from making further complaints. Certainly, in my experience—

**Senator XENOPHON:** Sorry, what percentage of those had negative experiences which discouraged them from ever doing it again?

**Dr Armstrong:** It was over half.

**Senator XENOPHON:** You might want to take that on notice.

**Dr Armstrong:** We will take that on notice.

**AIDA response**

AIDA's response to the above question is based on the 36 overall responses provided to the *AIDA Member survey on Bullying, Racism and Lateral Violence in the workplace* ('the Survey'). Please note any analysis based on a small overall number of responses needs to be treated with caution and is to be read in terms of indications or trends only.

In response to Senator Xenophon's question AIDA advises that no survey respondents reported '*negative experiences which discouraged them from ever doing it* [reporting incidences of bullying, racism or lateral violence] *again.*'

However, the survey contained a number of other potentially relevant questions AIDA hopes may be of use to this Inquiry:

Q8: Did you formally report the incident? (Responses received from 27 out of 36 respondents)

Q9: If yes: Who did you report the incidence to and what was the outcome? (Responses received from nine out of 36 respondents)

Q10: If not: Why did you not report the incidence? (Responses received from 13 out of 36 respondents)

The responses to these questions are summarised below and provide some information on the prevalence of 'negative experiences' among survey respondents in regards to the reporting of experienced and/or witnessed incidences of bullying, racism, and/or lateral violence.

Of the 27 respondents to the question whether they had formally reported the incident they had witnessed and/or experienced, 15 had not done so and a further three preferred not to say. Only nine of the 27 respondents had formally reported the incident and seven of those mentioned that their reporting had led to negative experiences.

Eight out of the 13 respondents that provided information as to why they had not reported the incident mentioned that they had not reported because of a lack of trust/confidence in the reporting process and outcomes.

## Question B

**Senator XENOPHON:** Are these complaints to AHPRA?

**Dr Armstrong:** Mostly to more local establishments.

**Senator XENOPHON:** Can you tell me, or on notice, of your experiences with AHPRA—this inquiry is focused on AHPRA, the complaints process—and what the feedback has been, in terms of complaints to AHPRA? I do not know if Mr Dukes wants to jump in on that.

**Mr Dukes:** I think we will need to take that on notice.

## AIDA response

This question goes beyond the scope of what AIDA is able to provide information on. Our membership survey was structured around the themes of *Bullying, Racism and Lateral Violence in the workplace* with the medical complaints process providing but one aspect of the survey. The survey did not focus on the AHPRA complaints process.

Thank you once again for your consideration of AIDA's evidence and please do not hesitate to contact me on either (02) 6273 5013 [REDACTED] should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Craig Dukes  
AIDA CEO

16 November 2016