



Chiropractic
Dental
Medical
Nursing and Midwifery
Optometry

Osteopathy
Pharmacy
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Psychology

Ms Christine McDonald
Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

14 April 2011

Dear Ms McDonald

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

We are writing as Chairs of the ten National Health Profession Boards which are established by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. The National Law establishes a National Board for each profession in the National Scheme and establishes the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to support the National Boards and to administer the scheme. The Chairs are collectively writing to express their support for AHPRA and its submission to the Inquiry.

The reform of health practitioner regulation achieved through the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is extraordinary in its vision and scale. It is the most substantial and significant reform of health practitioner regulation in Australia to date. The National Scheme delivers key reforms including consistent national standards for each of the ten professions initially in the scheme.

Implementation of the National Scheme has involved major change. The National Law replaced 65 Acts of Parliament, the ten National Boards replaced over 82 state and territory registration boards and AHPRA replaced 37 organisations that supported the previous state and territory boards. On 1 July 2010 there was a new law, a new organisation, new staff, new registration standards for each profession and new processes.

The National Boards have worked in close partnership with AHPRA in the establishment and implementation of the National Scheme. There is regular communication and open discussion between the Chairs and AHPRA. For example, there is a monthly teleconference of all National Board Chairs, Chair of the Agency Management Committee and the CEO and senior staff of AHPRA.

The Chairs believe that AHPRA has achieved extraordinary outcomes given the size and complexity of the reform initiative. There have been a number of issues which have arisen during implementation of the National Scheme and all National Boards are concerned about the impact of these matters on health practitioners. However, when issues have become apparent, AHPRA has responsively analysed the causes; and, where it has been responsible has adopted changes to its practices.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

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The Chairs believe it is critical to see these transition issues in the context of the wider importance of the reform as a whole and as part of the early phases of a major change process. Chairs are already encouraged by the considerable signs of improvement.

The National Boards and AHPRA are committed to engendering the confidence and respect of health practitioners and to becoming a recognised leader in health practitioner regulation, as reflected in the joint Strategy for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme recently developed.

AHPRA has the full confidence of the Chairs of National Boards in administering health practitioner registration and achieving the strategic priorities of the National Scheme.

We would be happy to provide further information to the Committee if it would assist.

Yours sincerely

Glenn Ruscoe
Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia;
Forum of National Board Chairs

Dr Phillip Donato
Chair, Chiropractic Board of Australia

Dr John Lockwood
Chair, Dental Board of Australia

Dr Joanna Flynn
Chair, Medical Board of Australia

Anne Copeland
Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of
Australia

Colin Waldron
Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

Dr Robert Fendall
Chair, Osteopathy Board of Australia

Steven Marty
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia

Jason Warnock
Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair, Psychology Board of Australia