

Community Reference Group Communiqué

The fifth meeting of the Community Reference Group (CRG) was held at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) National office in Melbourne on Thursday 13 March 2014.

The following items were discussed/decided.

- The group received verbal updates from:
 - AHRPA CEO
 - AHRPA Statutory Offences Unit Coordinator
 - AHPRA Director of Notifications (ACT office)
- Discussed the AHPRA-Health Issues Centre (VIC) project and the workshop that most CRG attended in person the day before the meeting
 - Highlighted that from a consumer perspective the group would expect notifiers to be interviewed as part of the project and they are disappointed this has not been the case
 - Welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback to the project
 - Welcomed the opportunity for two CRG members to sit on the project steering committee
- Provided feedback on the types of advertising, messages and channels that would best serve the community when it comes to health practitioner regulation
- Discussed search engine optimization, and how the group would like to see individual register entries coming up in google searches for practitioner names
- Noted that they would like the public register to reflect every decision a Board makes about an individual practitioner (except for decisions relating to the health of a practitioner)
- Noted that, as a group, they are concerned that the current wording of the *Advertising guidelines* will discourage community and patient discussion, and that practitioners may be penalised when health consumers share their experiences online. Implementing the Guidelines as they stand appears likely to restrict community access to appropriate health care for people with particular needs and to jeopardise efforts for engagement by AHPRA and the Boards with both community and practitioners.
- Noted the more user friendly design of the shared codes and guidelines that came in to effect recently.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the CRG will be held at the AHPRA offices in Melbourne on 20 May 2014.

Paul Laris

Chair
Community Reference Group