

The Plan

2013/14

CAPABILITY

CONSISTENCY

SERVICE



Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander health practice | Occupational therapy |
| Chinese medicine | Optometry |
| Chiropractic | Osteopathy |
| Dental | Pharmacy |
| Medical | Physiotherapy |
| Medical radiation practice | Podiatry |
| Nursing and Midwifery | Psychology |

This plan

The 2013/14 business plan outlines our priorities and key actions to continually improve how we implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) to protect the public.¹ This plan outlines the steps we will take to achieve the goals we have set for the year.

How the plan fits with our strategy

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) works with 14 National Boards to implement the National Scheme. The *National Registration and Accreditation Scheme strategy 2011-2014* contains the vision, mission, values, and key strategic priorities for AHPRA and the National Boards. This is published on our website and will be reviewed during 2013/14. This plan supports the strategy.

The plan in a nutshell

For 2013/14, we have maintained our overriding commitment to build national consistency, service and capability at AHPRA. This commitment underpins everything we do.



- **Consistency** – Improving consistency means no unnecessary variation in administering the National Scheme through standardised national processes.
- **Service** – Improving the customer experience for the public, health practitioners, employers and other stakeholders.
- **Capability** – Working as a team and building our organisation, skill and capacity to deliver our regulatory responsibilities.

¹ The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the National Boards are responsible for implementing the National Scheme under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

Message from the CEO

As a relatively young organisation, our challenge is to find the right balance between managing the here-and-now while building the best and most efficient system of health practitioner regulation for the longer term.

Our 2013/14 business plan outlines our core focus on strengthening our processes and systems to support national consistency, effective service delivery and the capability of AHPRA. Every AHPRA staff member has a part to play in achieving these goals.

In particular, this plan outlines the actions that will support our role in protecting the public, including improvements and innovations to how we manage notifications. We will implement these changes with our staff, National Boards and partners in the health system.

In 2013/14, our efforts will be organised into five themes:

1. **embedding new services** (accreditation and audit)
2. **helping National Boards strengthen regulation** (policy, standards, and workforce reform)
3. **focusing on quality and measurement** (notifications, quality assurance, reporting)
4. **streamlining regulatory operations** (stakeholder engagement and systems improvements, including online), and
5. **refining enabling functions** (IT, data exchange, planning).

National consistency is at the heart of our efforts. The plan carries over several initiatives from previous years to extend our efforts to support this.

Better measurement and reporting of our performance is an important driving force. We are building and implementing the tools we need to better understand and report trends across all areas of our work. Greater transparency in everything we do continues to be very important to satisfy ourselves and the public that we are regulating effectively by managing quality, timeliness and volume in all areas of our work.

Partnerships with National Boards and effective teamwork across AHPRA are essential to accomplish our goals. We have the wisdom of three years' experience to draw on and the confidence of knowing what we can achieve by working together.

The plan is designed to make the most of the strengths of the National Scheme, with some projects designed to be piloted with a group of National Boards before they are applied more widely across other professions. I am confident that we will embrace this approach to innovation, testing, refinement and implementation across AHPRA. Managing change well is vital to the success of AHPRA.

We have achieved a lot and should be proud of how far we have come in three years. But there is still more to do. The year ahead will demand ambition and collaboration. The external focus on our work remains intense. The coming year will also see the three-year review of the National Scheme.

With pace, focus and determination I am confident we can deliver our accountabilities and responsibilities in order to improve public and patient safety and develop the Australian health workforce.



Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer

Guiding principles at work

The principles of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), guide our work and shape our behaviours, policies, processes and decision-making. The statements below show how these principles apply to our work:

- Transparent** Our work, processes and decision-making aim to be clear, accessible and understandable.
- Accountable** All our people are responsible for their actions and decision-making, consistent with the National Law, within the authority of their roles and consistent with AHPRA's values.
- Efficient** All our people are responsible for doing their work in a timely manner, using available resources prudently to support the implementation of the National Scheme in the public interest.
- Effective** Our processes, policies and decisions support the objectives of the National Law and regulatory outcomes that are proportional, keep the public safe, enable access to health services and help build a flexible, responsive, sustainable health workforce.
- Fair** Our policies, processes and decisions are lawful, respected and support natural justice principles. Our processes support our people, are consistently applied and well managed. The services we provide to others are consistent, clear and well communicated.

Our core regulatory and enabling functions

AHPRA continues to seek opportunities to improve health practitioner regulation across its five core regulatory functions.

- **Professional standards** – Providing policy advice to National Boards to enable implementation of the National Scheme.
- **Registration** – Making sure only health practitioners with the skills, qualifications and suitability to provide safe care to the Australian community are registered to practise.
- **Notifications** – Managing concerns raised about the health, performance and conduct of individual practitioners.²
- **Compliance** – Monitoring and auditing that ensures practitioners are complying with Board requirements.
- **Accreditation** – Working with accreditation authorities and committees to ensure that individuals who are qualified for general registration in the profession have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise their professions.



Core regulatory functions and enabling functions

² In NSW notifications are managed through a co-regulatory system.

Our core regulatory and enabling functions continued

We are also strengthening the nine enabling functions without which the National Scheme would not be possible: executive management, board governance and secretariat, business services, financial management, people, technology management, information management and reporting, legal services and communication channels.

These functions continue to provide a focus for AHPRA's operations, including improved measurement and accountability.

Every staff member is represented in these functions and every staff member contributes to the 2013/14 plan.

Major achievements in 2012/13

We are proud of our achievements for 2012/13.

- **New professions** – Four new health professions successfully joined the National Scheme, bringing more than 40,000 additional practitioners into national regulation.
- **Partnership** – A strong partnership, joint governance and collaboration between National Boards and AHPRA has strengthened our capability to deliver services on behalf of the Boards.
- **Service** – A decision to bring together our previous eight local customer service teams into a single national service. This marks a big step towards improving national capability, consistency and service.
- **Working with our partners** – Engagement activities with our stakeholders including:
 - introducing a *Service charter*
 - establishing a Community Reference Group
 - continuing our work with the Professions Reference Group
 - hosting community briefings in all states and territories, and
 - establishing a partnership with the Consumer Health Forum.
- **Measurement and reporting** – A new data repository has been established and will continue to expand with the addition of new, relevant datasets during 2013/14 to enable better measurement and reporting.
- **Streamlining** – Our online services have expanded or improved, making them more functional and better suited to servicing practitioners. This includes:
 - online applications for the four professions that joined the National Scheme on 1 July 2012
 - online applications for provisional psychology applicants
 - capturing missing residential addresses and dates of birth during the renewal process, and
 - the ability to conduct online surveys of practitioners.

Multi-year plan

The 2012/13 plan set in motion work designed to strengthen the consistency, service and capability of AHPRA in administering the National Scheme. This has built a strong foundation and produced results. Our work in a number of areas identified in last year's plan will continue over several years.

Many of the initiatives detailed in the 2013/14 plan will also take more than one year to complete. This reflects how short-term work often requires longer term planning. Where relevant, we have prepared multi-year work plans.

Responding to our environment

Regulation of health practitioners is a core element of Australia's healthcare system. It is all about patient and public safety in the context of the continued development of the health workforce.

The way we do our jobs is often the subject of intense external scrutiny. This is an expected and continuing part of the regulatory environment. It is important that we respond quickly and effectively to the needs of our stakeholders.

While AHPRA remains committed to improving all of our core regulatory activities, a number of our improvement initiatives in 2013/14 will focus on notifications. This will not be at the expense of our work in other areas.

Significant attention was focused on notifications in 2012/13 and much of the work planned for 2013/14 extends and strengthens this.

- **Reporting and measurement**

We made significant improvements to our measuring and reporting capabilities in 2012/13. In 2013/14 we will implement a more robust reporting framework so that National Boards, the Agency Management Committee and AHPRA managers will have a better understanding and a clearer view of what is happening in notifications management across AHPRA. This will help us satisfy ourselves and the public that we are regulating effectively and efficiently by managing quality, timeliness and volume in all areas of our work.

- **Stronger and more consistent processes and systems**

We implemented systems and processes designed to achieve greater consistency in the way we manage notifications across our national network in 2012/13. This will continue in 2013/14 and beyond, as we progressively extend our focus from notifications to compliance management and other core regulatory functions.

- **Consistency in decision-making**

We will continue our work to support National Boards as decision-makers to make informed, effective and consistent decisions in the context of the National Law, including decisions about notifications.

2013/14 improvement initiatives

This year's plan brings together work planned by National Boards and AHPRA. The combined work program for 2013/14 is ambitious and delivering it successfully will rely on a strong partnership between our dedicated and motivated staff and our skilled and passionate board and committee members.

This year, we have identified 20 improvement initiatives, organised into five broad themes. Each initiative includes specific areas of work. The National Executive Committee is accountable for the overall delivery of the plan, with responsibility for each of the 20 initiatives being assigned across the members. Some initiatives will continue over several years. Work plans, which outline the extent of what is ahead, exist for each of our improvement initiatives.

Five key themes and 20 initiatives

Embedding new services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively deliver the accreditation function Start practitioner audit for all professions
Helping National Boards strengthen regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct cross-profession review of regulatory policy, professional standards and workforce reform Increase the use of data for evidence-based regulation and policy Implement a framework for informed governance and secretariat support Support Board governance and succession planning
Focusing on quality and measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and review the notifications management process Develop and implement a quality assurance program Continue to implement the reporting framework Seek opportunities to improve productivity
Streamlining regulatory operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a national stakeholder communication and engagement strategy Continue to implement processes and systems Continue to improve online engagement Continue to build and apply legal capacity in the National Scheme
Refining enabling functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to improve service delivery Continue to implement IT strategy Improve data exchange facilities with external data partners Improve people management Develop mechanisms to better align National Board and AHPRA planning Implement an incident management system

What we plan to do

Embed new services

Effectively deliver the accreditation function	
Owner: Director, National Board Services	Implement a staged work plan that investigates options for multi-profession approaches to accreditation, supports committees to effectively deliver accreditation functions, and develops cross-profession accreditation policy and procedures aimed at increasing consistency.
Start practitioner audit for all professions	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	Deliver and support an ongoing system and process to audit practitioner compliance with mandatory registration standards. Includes policy, procedures and appropriate tools for implementation.

Help National Boards strengthen regulation

Conduct cross-profession review of regulatory policy, professional standards and workforce reform	
Owner: Director, National Board Services	<p>Undertake three significant pieces of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a three- to five-year policy work plan that identifies cross-Board, evidence-based policy projects • finalise reviews of 2010 registration standards, codes and guidelines and implement subsequent changes, and • develop a health workforce reform strategy, in consultation with stakeholders. <p>Support individual Boards that are planning to work on specific initiatives to foster national consistency of standards, processes and decision-making.</p> <p>Support Boards to collaborate with key stakeholders to facilitate workforce mobility. Boards undertaking specific programs of work such as prescribing pathway development, or scoping and implementing a nationwide health program, will be aided by AHPRA staff where appropriate.</p>
Increase the use of data for evidence-based regulation and policy	
Owner: Director, National Board Services	<p>Use and publish the data generated through the National Scheme to build evidence for regulatory decision-making and inform workforce planning and innovation. Develop and implement a policy and framework to guide and support research and analysis across the National Scheme.</p> <p>Assist Boards that have identified opportunities to invest in external research programs that support their regulatory functions.</p>

Implement a framework for informed governance and secretariat support	
Owner: National Coordinator, Regulatory Operations and NSW State Manager	<p>Establish policies, processes and tools to strengthen a nationally consistent approach to providing secretariat functions to national, state and territory boards and committees; and develop a strategy to assess and enhance the skills and competence of secretariat officers.</p> <p>Support Boards interested in reviewing their decision-making structures.</p>
Support Board governance and succession planning	
Owner: Director, National Board Services	<p>Boards are seeking opportunities to ensure high performance and effective and efficient outcomes.</p> <p>To support this and continue to improve board governance, AHPRA will coordinate an evaluation program across the National Boards and the Agency Management Committee. Includes establishing a member training and development program.</p> <p>With Boards, create a succession planning program and advise on improvements to current statutory appointment processes.</p>

Focus on quality and measurement

Monitor and review the notifications management process	
Owners: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation National Coordinator, Regulatory Operations and NSW State Manager	<p>Effective and consistent implementation of agreed operational processes for managing notifications to ensure effective and efficient regulatory decision making by National Boards and their delegates.</p>
Develop and implement a quality assurance program	
Owners: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation National Coordinator, Regulatory Operations and NSW State Manager	<p>Extend the work started in late 2012 to implement a quality (business) assurance framework and multi-year work plan that confirms that AHPRA is effectively delivering its key regulatory functions across our national network.</p>
Continue to implement the reporting framework	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	<p>Continue to implement the performance reporting framework.</p> <p>This aims to ensure reliable, accurate and timely indicators about a range of functions.</p>
Seek opportunities to improve productivity	
Owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Operations	<p>Introduce agreed activity measures so we can report on work in our core functions. Establishing baseline measures will guide planning and, over several years, enable us to understand and further improve our productivity in delivering the National Scheme.</p>

Streamline regulatory operations

Implement a national stakeholder communication and engagement strategy	
Owner: Director, National Board Services	<p>Develop and continue to implement a three-year coordinated, strategic and proactive approach to communication and engagement activities across the National Scheme.</p> <p>Assist individual Boards to implement targeted strategies to raise stakeholder awareness and confidence in health practitioner regulation through the National Scheme. This will involve strengthening partnerships with international regulatory stakeholders, including trans-Tasman partners, and developing collaborative strategies and activities.</p>
Continue to implement processes and systems	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	<p>Deliver an enhanced regulatory compliance system that strengthens efficient and effective health practitioner regulation. Improve the capacity of staff involved in compliance to deliver core regulatory functions consistently and effectively.</p> <p>Assist individual Boards to deliver specific work programs such as piloting a national exam program.</p>
Continue to improve online engagement	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	<p>Provide a more comprehensive self-service capacity for practitioners by improving online transaction services and options. Review the content, navigation and structure of the 15 websites to improve the customer experience and make the sites more usable and accessible.</p>
Continue to build and apply legal capacity in the National Scheme	
Owner: General Counsel	<p>Better support decision-makers, including National Boards, committees, panellists and AHPRA staff, to make informed, effective and consistent decisions that are compliant with the National Law. This involves extending work with the Panels Working Group, timely communication of case law and legal matters and developing a prosecution policy framework.</p>

Refine enabling functions

Seek opportunities to improve service delivery	
<p>Owners: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation</p> <p>National Coordinator, Regulatory Operations and NSW State Manager</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to redistribute workloads to improve service delivery and efficiency. Use existing software to improve the efficiency of internal processes.</p>
Continue to implement IT strategy	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	<p>Implement the initiatives outlined in the second year of the approved IT strategy. This will minimise risk, improve the security of AHPRA IT systems, deliver a reliable and cost-effective data centre and increase infrastructure capability.</p>

Improve data exchange facilities with external data partners	
Owner: Director, Business Improvement and Innovation	Improve the reliability, accuracy and efficiency of data exchange with external partners. Improved information management will come from a better digital interface with other agencies, as well as better infrastructure and processes that support data exchange.
Improve people management	
Owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Operations	Implement the second year of the three-year HR 'roadmap'. This includes finalising and publishing a suite of HR policies; developing and delivering structured training programs; and conducting a staff engagement and board satisfaction survey.
Develop mechanisms to better align National Board and AHPRA planning	
Owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Operations	Develop mechanisms that further align the priorities, desired outcomes and workplans of Boards and AHPRA for planning cycles; and refresh the strategy for the National Scheme. Support the three-year review of the National Scheme and related review process.
Implement an incident management system	
Owner: Director, Finance and Corporate Operations	Implement an organisation-wide framework that enables AHPRA to identify, record, respond to and analyse incidents.

For more information

- You can view this document and the *National Registration and Accreditation Scheme strategy 2011-2014* online at www.ahpra.gov.au.
- Please email planning@ahpra.gov.au to provide feedback and input on business planning.

