

## Action plan

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23 September 2014

### Setting things right: Action plan to improve our customer service

Improving customer service – and making it easy for people to interact with us - is important to us.

This document outlines the actions we are taking to improve consumers' experience when they engage with the National Scheme, whether via National Boards or AHPRA.

This work is ongoing. AHPRA will provide updates on this work as it progresses.

#### What we have done so far

- **Asked a consumer group to tell us what we can do better.** Victoria's Health Issues Centre (HIC) is an independent community and consumer group that focuses on health policy. We commissioned the HIC to make [practical suggestions](#) about what we can do to improve the experience of consumers who make a complaint about a registered health practitioner.
- **Improved our systems and processes to support faster resolution of notifications (complaints about practitioners).** This means that we are paying close attention to the time it takes to assess, investigate and finalise notifications. We will soon start reporting our performance.
- **Established a [Community Reference Group](#)** that advises us on how our work may impact on patients and clients, on ways to engage better and communicate more clearly with members of the community. The group publishes its [communiqués](#) on the AHPRA website.
- **Updated all the homepages across all 15 websites** so that the most used information is accessible straight from the front pages and making it easier for visitors to see whether they are on a National Board or AHPRA website. These changes were based on what consumers search for on the web and feedback from the Community Reference Group.
- **Begun rolling reviews of existing web content** across the National Boards and AHPRA websites and publishing that information in a way that is easier to read. Since the beginning of 2014 we have ensured that all new content posted on these 15 websites complies with accessibility guidelines. This means that the content is more accessible to people with disabilities and people using technology such as screen readers.
- **Started engaging with consumers and practitioners via Twitter** to provide another way to communicate with us. We use Twitter to answer general questions and share important information, and to encourage people to join in current consultations or read news items that may be relevant to them. We are also holding Twitter chats on topics such as the *Advertising guidelines* and processing applications from internationally qualified nurses and midwives.
- **Made it easier to call us and provided quicker responses** by updating how we take calls and providing more training for our staff. Our response times are better than ever. In the past financial year 79% of calls are answered within 90 seconds and 95% of callers said they were satisfied/very satisfied with the call.

## What we will focus on next

- **Providing specialist training for staff** who will be the first contact for people making a notification (complaint) about a practitioner so they have the skills to help people through the process. Staff will be trained to provide straight forward information about what we do and what to expect in the process. We'll also be working to understand the outcome people are looking for and provide help to get the issue to the right place if we are not able to deliver the outcome they are after. We'll also be clear about what we can and what we can't do.
- **Updating the websites for all National Boards and AHPRA** to make finding relevant information easier. The new sites will be laid out in a way that makes it easier for different groups with specific interests to access the right information. A focus will be to reduce 'clutter', make it easier to navigate and separate information that may be more relevant to only some readers.
- **Further improving how we manage notifications (complaints)**, including testing different approaches and implementing the processes that work best within the requirements of the National Law. Our focus will be ensuring that consumers who make notifications have all the information that is relevant to them (and in a format that is easy to understand).
- **Sharing more detailed information with people who have made a notification (complaint).** The National Law prevents us from sharing different types of information with people who have made a complaint. Our focus will be on looking at ways we can provide more information, particularly when a National Board has considered the notification and decided it does not need to take further action to keep the public safe.
- **Using clearer letters that are in plain language**, for people who make a notification (complaint) about a health practitioner that explain how the process works. These letters have been reviewed by a health communication consultant and a member of the Community Reference Group, and will be implemented soon.
- **Establishing an editorial panel to help us make our information clearer**, made up of external reviewers (including someone with health literacy expertise). The panel will review important information for us and let us know if we can make it better and easier to understand, and how else we can communicate better.

## What can we do better?

While we are restricted in what we can say and do in some instances, we are focusing on how we can be easier to deal with and clearer in how we engage with consumers and practitioners as well as in the information we provide.

If you have a suggestion on how we can improve, or would like to provide feedback on our information, please email [communications@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:communications@ahpra.gov.au).

## For more information

- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#)
- For registration enquiries call: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers)
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