



Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Practice
Chinese Medicine
Chiropractic
Dental
Medical
Medical Radiation Practice
Nursing and Midwifery

Occupational Therapy
Optometry
Osteopathy
Pharmacy
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Psychology

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

The 2015/16 Business Plan

2015/16

Introduction from the CEO

AHPRA's objective is to work with National Boards to become a recognised leader in health practitioner regulation and to improve professional standards and protect the public. This contributes to a safer healthcare system for all Australians.

1 July 2015 marked five years since the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) was introduced.

While this means we are still relatively young, we have achieved a lot in this time, through close partnership with the 14 National Boards and their committees, our staff, the community, governments, the professions and our stakeholders.

In an environment in which there has been a significant growth in the number of registered health practitioners, we are managing notifications (complaints) more efficiently than ever before and our customer service has been enhanced through the expansion of our online services, including social media. More practitioners are renewing their registration online, and we have found new ways to encourage members of the community to use the public register to check the registration status of their practitioner. The smooth introduction of international criminal history checks in early 2015 has also provided greater public protection.

Patient safety will always be at the heart of what we do, and maintaining standards and ensuring we have a safe health workforce is vital to our work as a regulator.

Yet there will always be new demands and new challenges. The health workforce will continue to grow and the regulatory and health environment will continue to evolve.

To support AHPRA's objectives in the face of these challenges and ensure the ongoing success of the National Scheme, our focus for 2015/16 will be:

1. **refining our service model:** further developing AHPRA to promote a collaborative culture, that is both service and achievement-oriented
2. **applying a 'risk-based' regulation philosophy:** providing corporate and infrastructure support to embed risk-based approaches that are data-based and responsive to needs and which reflect our regulatory principles, and
3. **building our organisational capacity for performance:** galvanising information, risk assessment and funds management with clear and strong governance.

In the year ahead, we will continue to partner with Boards to strengthen the processes and systems that support national consistency, simplified service delivery and AHPRA's regulatory capability.

Working closely with AHPRA staff, we will progressively transform our core processes and redesign the way we work. We will refine key performance indicators for registration, notifications, monitoring of compliance, and Board support, legal services and accreditation. To complement this work we will continue to build our organisational culture to support our focus on service, achievement and collaboration.

The National Scheme will undoubtedly continue to be under scrutiny and the independent three-year review of the scheme (the NRAS review) will highlight opportunities for development. However, we are not waiting for the final review outcomes to continue our work to make improvements.

For this reason, the 2015/16 business plan sets out an important program of work. It outlines the major initiatives through which, together with the Boards and our partners in the health sector, we will strive to be a trusted leader in the regulation of health practitioners and the protection of the public.

Martin Fletcher
CEO

Message from the Chair of the Forum of Chairs

This year, increased collaboration between the Boards has been driven by our agreed regulatory principles, which are a major part of meeting responsibilities in regulating the health professions in the public interest. It has also been facilitated by the preparations for and responses to the independent review of the scheme.

Areas of focus include:

- reviewing shared codes and guidelines
- developing and implementing new cross-board policies
- developing a deeper understanding and strategic approach to workforce reform objectives of the National Law, and
- exploring a greater range of multi-professional approaches to health practitioner regulation, such as shared immediate action committees.

Over the coming year, in addition to further developing the activities listed above, the Boards and AHPRA will work together to identify the evidence requirements for risk-based regulation and generate evidence to increase their capacity for the delivery of regulatory research.

Further monitoring, improvement and potential expansion of online communications and services will also be a focus.

Paul Shinkfield

Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia
Chair, Forum of Chairs of National Boards

2015/16 Business Plan

AHPRA continues to work closely with the National Boards to develop an integrated business plan for 2015/16. This plan builds on the platform we have already created and is informed by the [Regulatory principles for the National Scheme](#).

What guides us?

AHPRA works with the 14 Boards to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The annual planning process delivers on the objectives and guiding principles of the scheme.

The National Scheme has six key objectives:

1. protection of public safety
2. facilitation of workforce mobility
3. facilitation of high-quality education and training
4. facilitation of assessment of overseas-trained health practitioners
5. promotion of access to health services, and
6. development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable workforce.

Further to the objectives, there are guiding principles that state that:

- the National Scheme must operate in a transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way
- fees payable by practitioners must be reasonable, and
- restrictions on the practice of a health profession are only to be imposed if that is what is required to ensure health services provided to the public are safe, and of the quality expected in Australia.

The 2015/16 Business Plan in a nutshell

The plan for 2015/16 focuses on delivering results of the previous year's initiatives and consolidating the work undertaken to date. The business-as-usual work and the improvement initiatives outline ways AHPRA will partner with the Agency Management Committee and the Boards.

Our work within the plan focuses on three priority domains:

Refine our service model

Transforming our core processes to a new way of working, to ensure we are able to deliver a more streamlined, efficient and effective service that will deliver long-term benefits for AHPRA, its stakeholders and the public. This includes incorporating high regulatory workload and multi-profession services.

Risk-based regulation

Implementing the regulatory principles and developing our risk-based activities. This includes undertaking initiatives to improve data quality, structure and architecture, providing proactive risk analysis and reducing our future support costs.

Build our organisational capacity for performance

Consolidate our organisational capability through implementing our culture work; build on our change initiatives, our performance management and reporting framework; and ensure we have the right regulatory and management support systems and infrastructure we need for the future. Investment in new system solutions aligned to nationally consistent processes to drive consistent outcomes is critical to this objective.

Dependencies

[National Scheme Strategy](#)

The strategy sets out our vision, mission and strategic priorities. This statement has been developed jointly by the Boards and AHPRA.

[Corporate Plan](#)

This sets out how we aim to play our part in achieving the National Scheme Strategy.

[Regulatory principles](#)

The principles are designed to shape thinking about regulatory decision-making in the National Scheme. They are endorsed by all the Boards and the Agency Management Committee.

Directorate commitments

The following section outlines what we expect to achieve across our key priority domains with respect to each of the three directorates.

Strategy and Policy directorate

Role of the directorate

The directorate is responsible for engaging with national and international stakeholders including consumers, practitioners and their representative organisations and employers, our partners in regulation and other regulatory bodies, and health ministers and their departmental officials, who are our primary authorisers.

The directorate provides policy and governance advice, management of projects and executive support to all Boards, their committees, and the Forum of Chairs and its sub-committees, such as the accreditation liaison group.

The directorate undertakes strategic analysis and planning, and supports both the community and professions reference groups, and provides strategic advice to the AHPRA CEO and Agency Management Committee. The directorate also has oversight of accreditation within the scheme.

By the end of the year Strategy and Policy will have completed the following new initiatives:

- work, including research, on refining English language skill requirements (across professions and countries)
- a review of initial registration standards and guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practitioner Board of Australia, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia and Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
- support multi-profession approaches in accreditation by exploring options such as a multi-profession accreditation committee
- comparative work on UK and National Scheme models of accreditation
- implement recommendations and opportunities from the NRAS review
- promote and advertise our role and benefits to the community, practitioners and others using a range of media, to increase the awareness of the National Scheme
- produce YouTube training videos on profession specific and general issues, such as renewal campaigns and Grad Online
- shape a future model of secretariat service delivery to Boards and committees, informed by the outcomes of the NRAS review
- build greater policy and operational engagement and cross-directorate collaboration, including through Regulatory Policy Working Group (RPWG)
- implement a customer relationship management tool that will allow accurate stakeholder lists, activities and reporting
- establish an expert editorial panel, including expertise in health literacy and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- develop a regulatory taxonomy to underpin risk-analysis
- conduct a program of cross-professional risk analyses to identify high priority or emerging risk patterns
- procure and manage cost-effective access to scholarly literature resources for Board members and staff
- partner with University of Melbourne as part of the National Health and Medical Research Council grant on 'hot-spotting' and developing a predicative risk tool
- conduct a longitudinal study to measure the impact of practice restrictions on high-risk practitioners, and
- lead and coordinate process for developing the National Scheme Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and strategic scorecard.

Business as usual activities for Strategy and Policy include:

- assist Boards to develop, review and implement cross-profession regulatory policy
- support accreditation committees to develop, implement and review accreditation standards and processes
- support Boards to oversee effective delivery of accreditation functions within the scheme
- lead the development of a revised service delivery model to underpin the Health Profession Agreements
- promote integration of the National Scheme accountability framework, regulatory principles and risk-based regulation into AHPRA strategies, its service model and systems
- continue building the webinar function
- coordinate production of all key internal and external publications
- assist Boards to develop, review and implement cross-profession regulatory policy
- support the assessment of overseas qualified practitioners and their qualifications
- undertake cross-profession regulatory risk analyses
- provide statistical advice to ensure policies, systems and processes support risk-based analysis and decision-making
- develop, implement and manage governance processes and procedures for data access, release and exchange for research
- advise the National Executive on statistical and research matters
- coordinate development and alignment of Board regulatory work plans, and
- build AHPRA's capacity and infrastructure for delivering regulatory research.

Regulatory Operations directorate

Role of the directorate

The directorate is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of AHPRA's core regulatory functions under the National Law. It also provides leadership and strategic direction in the development and delivery of operational policy and procedures that support decision-making across the regulatory functions.

Delivery occurs through the state and territory office network, which also deals directly with local stakeholders and supports decision-making of local Boards and committees. The directorate carries accountability for operational performance across the regulatory functions and is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance of its processes, and improved efficiency and effectiveness through the refinement of its operating/service model.

The directorate contributes to the development of regulatory policy, providing operational impact advice to all 14 Boards and strategic operational advice to the CEO of AHPRA and the Agency Management Committee.

By the end of the year Regulatory Operations will have completed the following initiatives:

- establish an enhanced suite of documented processes and guidance documents for core operational functions
- establish a data quality strategy and remediation schedule
- design a flexible operational strategy to accommodate both multi-profession and specialised operational activities
- establish a streamlined point of entry for notifications lodgement including trial of a national Notifications Intake Centre (NIC)
- develop a comprehensive student register strategy
- implement a risk-based approach to alcohol and drug screening processes including the use of an expert reference group
- establish relevant risk-based performance indicators across all work streams
- implement formal agreements for the exchange of data with relevant entities including Medicare, drugs of dependence units and coroners
- continue building collaborative relationships with health complaints entities (HCEs) particularly in relation to joint consideration as defined in the National Law
- implement the Medical Board of Australia performance assessment program
- contribute to a model of collaboration across the three directorates to improve policy implementation
- implement a new regulatory operational guidance framework and policy statements to drive national consistency and performance
- train staff to use improved reporting and management tools to manage workflow, throughput and performance, and
- align and deliver lean processes across core operational functions with appropriate system support.

Business as usual activities for Regulatory Operations include:

- develop nationally consistent process and procedures and continuous improvement of existing operational guidance materials across core functions
- support the Statutory Offences Unit (SOU) to manage statutory offence investigation/prosecution workloads
- operationalise AHPRA and Board policy, including implementation and change management
- deliver measurable improvements to the notifier and practitioner experience and relationship with HCEs
- identify target processes for online forms
- improve governance and integrity of the public register, facilitating access to data and ensuring reliable data quality
- embed the regulatory principles into operational activities
- conduct the practitioner audit across the professions
- refine operational tools to support good regulatory decision-making
- build the culture profile and structure within operations while incorporating models of service concepts
- enhance capacity to manage performance and usefully interpret performance data to inform planning and strategy
- refine the approach to allocation of legal work between internal resources and panel firms, and
- participate in the Regulatory Policy Working Group (RPWG) and engage with Boards on policy development and potential operational impact.

Business Services directorate

Role of the directorate

Effective business and corporate support is vital to the delivery of AHPRA's objectives. Planning AHPRA's corporate support functions involves analysing the needs of the organisation its statutory requirements, its performance against benchmarks and the strategic change required to continuously improve and maintain AHPRA as an effective and efficient organisation. Some of the directorate's services include:

- ensuring both the regulatory functions and other key stakeholders within AHPRA are supported by the most efficient and effective systems and processes
- coordinating an effective, transparent business planning model and reporting platform which supports all directorates across the organisation to access real-time data in making key business decisions
- delivering a business-owned strategic direction in relation to our overall IT architecture
- delivering a fit-for-purpose HR function that meets the needs of the business
- delivering an ongoing and transparent corporate risk profile to ensure the organisation is not at risk, and
- coordinating a transparent, accurate and fit-for-purpose financial framework geared to ensure financial statutory compliance and procurement oversight, and enable to business to operate efficiently and effectively.

By the end of the year Business Services will have completed the following initiatives:

- implement a learning and development framework focussed on people
- new HR processes that meet the needs of the organisation
- improve application of corporate governance rules and procurement and contracting rules
- develop a new Business Services operational model across the organisation
- implement a new enterprise resource planning tool (ERP) organisation-wide
- develop of integrated reporting of both HR and finance to all managers across the organisation
- implement a new performance reporting framework with enhanced business intelligence capabilities, and
- implement a corporate assurance business system to efficiently identify risks and appropriate mitigation strategies.

Business as usual activities for Business Services include:

- continually improve our base infrastructure to provide a reliable system, and implement an IT foundation and infrastructure program of works
- support the delivery of balance scorecards designed to track AHPRA's performance against its overall strategy
- deliver a professional and timely service to recruiting and appointing board, committee and panel members and continue recruiting and managing the panels list
- embed information governance and management principles/policies into business processes and staff behaviour, and reduce privacy, financial and reputational risks
- continue to deliver reliable and timely improvements in-line with our regulatory requirements
- enhance corporate risk and compliance testing
- deliver improved HR transactional and administrative functions required for day-to-day operations for the organisation
- implement the data warehouse and reporting program of work to improve accessibility, usability, access control, maintenance and ownership of our information assets
- provide an effective and efficient financial budgeting, reporting, forecasting and analysis support to the organisation, and
- maintain effective and efficient physical working environments for all state and territory offices so that they meet the changing needs of the organisation.

For more information

You can view this document and the *National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Strategy 2011-2014* online at www.ahpra.gov.au.

If you have any feedback on business planning, [please email the AHPRA planning team](#).