

Professions Reference Group Communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) National office in Melbourne on Wednesday 30 August 2017.

AHPRA update

AHPRA CEO, Martin Fletcher, updated members on matters including:

- AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) [had published a status report](#) on the implementation of recommendations from the *Independent review of the use of chaperones*, and that the MBA had established a National Sexual Boundaries Notifications Committee to deal with all matters about sexual misconduct. Discussion with other National Boards on adopting the MBA's approach was now underway.
- AHPRA was in the early stages of dialogue with the National Disability Insurance Agency regarding the [NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework](#)
- AHPRA was at the early stages of implementing an [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy](#) for the National Scheme, working on ways the National Scheme might contribute to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes:
 - finding opportunities in improving registered health practitioner understanding of concepts such as 'cultural safety' and 'cultural capability'
 - compiling and promoting data on Indigenous health practitioners in the health professions, and
 - developing a reconciliation action plan.
- Samantha Gavel was no longer the Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner, and has been appointed the NSW Privacy Commissioner ([Richelle McCausland](#) is currently Acting National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner)
- the MBA was currently considering the final report from the MBA's Expert Advisory Group about the options for revalidation in Australia, with other National Boards taking an interest in the findings.

Regulatory operations

Members were updated on the performance of the directorate in 2016/17 and ongoing work with notifiers and health practitioners to improve their experience of the notifications process.

Implementation of outcomes for the NRAS review

Members were updated on the progress of amendments to the National Law, expected timeframes for the proposed rounds of amendments to be progressed and upcoming consultations.

Advertising compliance strategy

Members were updated on advertising compliance and enforcement, noting that further work included:

- improving consumers' understanding of practitioner advertising
- helping practitioners understand and identify non-compliant advertising, with opportunities for joint work with professional associations, and
- addressing concerns around the material on third-party websites.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the PRG will be held on Thursday, 30 November 2017.

Jodette Kotz

Chair

Professions Reference Group