



## Community Reference Group Communique

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### **Q1 / 2019 meeting**

The Community Reference Group (CRG) met at the AHPRA National Office in Melbourne on Tuesday 5 March 2019.

### **Update from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia**

Petrina Halloran (Policy Manager) and Tanya Vogt (Executive Officer) from the Nursing and Midwifery Team provided an update on midwife registration, private practice and home births. Members discussed insurance arrangements for privately practising midwives and suggested developing clear, concise information at the front-end of guidelines and policies outlining what level of care patients should expect to receive.

### **Review of AHPRA confidentiality safeguards by National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner**

Ms Richelle McCausland, the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner, spoke to the CRG about a review her office is conducting into confidentiality safeguards for people who make a notification to AHPRA. Members agreed it was important for notifiers to have the option to make confidential notifications and that consideration should be given to if a notifier needs to be identified, and if so, when in the process this should occur. Members said that where notifiers are fearful of retribution this should be identified, and no identifying information shared with the practitioner.

Members generally agreed that if the notification is of a broad nature and relates to a practitioner's general conduct, it is questionable whether it's necessary for the notifier to be identified. Other data sources and third-party information should be used to build a case, rather than relying solely on the notifier's identity. Data should also be used to help identify 'hot spots' of notifications.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy update**

The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Program Manager, Ms Jayde Fuller, said AHPRA will soon commence recruitment for a Project Officer.

Public consultation will soon start on developing a definition for 'cultural safety' for the National Scheme, and once a definition has been decided it will be incorporated into the codes.

A tender is underway for providers to run cultural safety training for AHPRA staff, National Boards and accreditation authorities, and the outcome should be publicly announced in the coming weeks. AHPRA is also hoping to have drafted a Reconciliation Action Plan for 2019/2020 by July this year.

Members discussed that when it comes to registering as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner, obtaining proof of Aboriginality can be very complex and difficult.

The group strongly agreed that cultural aspects must be brought into clinical care.

The visiting CEO and Registrar at the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand provided the New Zealand perspective of incorporating 'cultural competence' into regulation under their legislation.

### **Reflections on CRG session at the 2019 NRAS Combined Meeting**

The CRG was happy with attendance at their breakfast session the prior week and shared a range of perspectives they had heard throughout the session.

## **AHPRA update**

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said legislative amendments to the National Law on mandatory reporting have been passed and will now roll out in every state and territory except Western Australia. Mr Fletcher also advised about the Chiropractic Board of Australia had developed an interim policy on spinal manipulation for infants and young children while and independent review is carried out.

Mr Fletcher talked about AHPRA's transition to a national operating model – the national model pivots AHPRA's work by function and complexity rather than geography to simplify workflows and increase consistency under the National Law.

Mr Fletcher said AHPRA has provided a background paper to the Royal Commission outlining the role of AHPRA and the National Boards. Maddocks has been contracted as AHPRA's external legal advisor.

## **Developing service principles for AHPRA**

The CRG provided opinions on a draft set of high-level service principles that aim to communicate what kind of service people can expect internally and externally. The group agreed that service principles are a good idea and recommended making them succinct, memorable and personal.

## **Notifications**

AHPRA's national Notifications Team and Communications Team partnered to produce a video series to share with notifiers, practitioners and the public about what they can expect from AHPRA's notifications process. The CRG provided their feedback on draft scripts and pilots, and the videos recently launched to the public.

In this meeting the group provided suggestions for other topics or themes that would be most helpful to capture in public-facing videos. Suggestions included getting registered, AHPRA's research and data, timeliness and outcomes, and more.

## **Single health complaints website**

AHPRA is considering developing a single health complaints website, in partnership with Health Complaints Entities and other regulatory agencies, to better direct people to the right organisations when raising a concern. The CRG was unanimous in their support of a single health complaints website, to serve as a decision-aid.

## **Cosmetic surgery and procedures**

AHPRA sought feedback from the CRG about providing information to consumers about the standard of practice they should expect from practitioners around cosmetic surgery and procedures. The information could also alert consumers to potential risk, and how to minimise them. Some difficulties include that treatments are promoted as 'beauty' treatments rather than 'health' procedures, which plays down the potential risks involved; and the fact that a lot of complaints are made against practitioners who are not registered.

The group agreed that a new approach is needed to communicate with the young target demographic – tapping in to social media, online forums and influencers who young women look up to and respect.

## **Social research project update**

AHPRA ran a social research project to test awareness of, and sentiment towards, AHPRA and the National Boards, and help enable stronger confidence and trust in our work. Overall the key findings showed stakeholder perceptions of AHPRA and the National Boards are generally positive, but there is a need for a shared vision and a more unified public 'face' of the National Scheme.

There was much discussion about branding options, and the CRG was generally in favour of keeping the AHPRA logo as it is already known and recognised, and using a stylised signature block for correspondence from National Boards.

## **Mark Bodycoat**

Chair

Community Reference Group