

Professions Reference Group Communiqué

The Professions Reference Group (PRG) met via video conference on Thursday 20 August 2020.

The meeting was chaired by Nello Marino from the Australian Podiatry Association.

Ahpra update

Ahpra's CEO Martin Fletcher provided an update on the work of Ahpra to members.

- The number of practitioners on the pandemic response sub-register is stable at around 35,000. We sent an email to all nurses on the sub-register about opportunities to register for the Commonwealth's aged care surge workforce and an update to all practitioners about the register and its current status. We are monitoring the use of the sub-register for workforce gaps related to consequences of the pandemic rather than specific COVID-19 work. We are evaluating the pandemic sub-register and will soon be sending communication inviting all on the sub-register to complete a survey. This will help us understand their experience and future intentions. A parallel survey to determine the value of the sub-register to employers, jurisdictions and stakeholders, such as the PRG, is also being planned.
- Ahpra offices have now reopened in Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and Hobart to staff (but not public) with a Team A and Team B arrangement. Canberra's reopening will be based on timing of public health advice from ACT Health while no firm date has been set for Sydney and Melbourne.
- Three more [Taking care podcasts](#) have been produced since the last meeting, these are:
 - Board members' experiences of being on a regulatory Board
 - patient and health practitioner's perspectives on caring for patients and being a patient during the pandemic, and
 - medical training, which coincides with the launch of the second medical training survey.

Regulatory operations update

Ahpra's Executive Director, Regulatory Operations Kym Ayscough updated members.

- Ms Ayscough gave a presentation on the new graduate registration campaign and plans to manage the arrival pattern of applications with the intention of pre-assessing as many as possible. Plans include opening of the new graduate registration campaign early from 14 September 2020, to allow more time for pre-assessment, and working closely with education providers to understand course completion dates.
- Targeted communications will be directed to students, interns, and provisional to general registration applicants about timelines and how to complete applications, including the development of a new video. Other activities to help this round of new graduate registration include: improvements to the online status tracker, ensuring applicants are kept up-to-date with progress of their application at key points, State and Territory Managers will liaise with employers on employment start dates and current processing timeframes, Boards will liaise with education providers, particularly on updates to graduation dates/release of graduate lists and improving the quality of the graduate list information.
- A graduate registration application video is nearing completion, focused on supporting lodgement of complete applications. Members were shown a draft animated video and agreed that it would be a helpful tool.

Shared revised Code of conduct preliminary consultation

Ahpra's National Director, Policy and Accreditation Helen Townley updated members.

- The revised shared Code of conduct for twelve National Boards is currently at its preliminary consultation stage. The review period has been extended to 9 October 2020 from the usual eight week consultation

to ten weeks due to COVID-19. Targeted user-testing of content will be conducted with professions and the public to ensure that the revised shared Code of conduct is helpful, user-friendly and clear. The Board Executive Officers will contact the PRG associations for their interest by nominating practitioners to provide feedback through consultation and user-testing of content.

Social research survey update

Ahpra's Executive Director, Strategy and Policy Chris Robertson updated members.

- Ahpra and the National Boards have recently published a report on the results of the [2019 social research survey](#) of stakeholders' understanding, trust and confidence in our role and work. The insights gained will inform how we can improve our engagement with both the professions and the community. We are now preparing for this year's survey which is planned for October. We are currently planning this work and will provide the PRG with updates when ready for the rollout.

Other business

- Members were interested about workforce data and attrition. Mr Robertson replied that, at present, the Boards' publish quarterly statistics. We are actively looking into our data strategy, the completeness of the data particularly from the student to practitioner experience and other opportunities relating to our data use.

Next meeting

The next virtual meeting is on Thursday 1 October 2020 at 3 – 4pm.

Nello Marino

Chair
Professions Reference Group