

Community Advisory Council communiqué

March 2023

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) met face to face in the Ahpra Melbourne office on Thursday 23 March and Friday 24 March 2023. This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the meeting.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the meeting was being held and paid respect to their Elders, past and present.

The Chair acknowledged and thanked the three members of the CAC who have recently resigned.

CEO update

Members noted the highlights from the CEO update and report:

- the appearance by the CEO at the supplementary Senate Community Affairs Committee Estimates Hearing on 16 February 2023
- the National Cabinet review of workforce regulatory settings led by Ms Robyn Kruk AO. It has been recognised that there is much complexity and frustration for international applicants including the duplication of processes and documents with different agencies, raising the need for an information portal where all documentation can be stored and viewed by necessary agencies
- the completion of the first interim report of the evaluation of the Notifier Support Service indicating the service has been successful, and the plan to expand the service. CAC members identified that many consumers need similar support when they make a notification, especially when notifications are about deaths or misconduct cases. Martin recommended that Belinda Lines, Lead Social Worker for the Service to attend a future CAC meeting to discuss the evaluation and lessons learnt
- the expected media coverage on the Expert Advisory Group work around the stress and distress in practitioners subject to regulatory action

Other business

Other matters that were considered and discussed by Council members included:

- a presentation from Matthew Hardy, National Director of Notifications providing an overview of the Notifications work. CAC followed up with a set of specific questions to Matt around notifier satisfaction, accessibility to priority populations and consistent methodology.
- a brief update from Kevin Yeh Yow Senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Notifications Officer on the Cultural Safety Notifications working group. The working group has 13 members and is Chaired by Linda Renouf, a long term First Nations community member in the National Scheme. There have been two meetings since December 2022.
- a presentation from Jason McHeyzer, National Director, Compliance with an update on providing the detail and context about the compliance monitoring processes
- a presentation on the background and development of the Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Statement template and the Patient and Consumer Health and Safety Impact Assessment. CAC members were positive about the templates and would like all consultation processes to include completed templates prior to coming to the CAC for consideration.
- Boundaries blueprint:
 - media release on the Boundaries Blueprint to improve public safety in health regulation
 - an overview of the recommendation to Ministers regarding health practitioners' information on the register to be expanded to include final decisions on professional misconduct in sexual boundary violations, and criminal convictions of sexual offences, and

- an update on improving explanatory information on regulatory action noting the following:
 - improve explanatory information for the public on regulatory action taken around proven findings of professional misconduct in relation to sexual boundary violations, and
 - restrictions would be drafted to include a more detailed plain English explanation at the end of the restriction description, and to ensure descriptions include the nature of the misconduct that led to the conditions
- Sophy Athan, community member on the Chinese Medicine Board, and an ex-CAC member, and a member of the Australian Patients Association provided an update on the most recent Australian Healthcare Index Report
- an update from Joe Goddard-Williams, Ahpra Victorian State Manager on a project on the LGBTQIA+ communities for the National Scheme, important outcomes relate to discrimination, access, health equity, gender-based restrictions and training, Ahpra is aiming to undertake a gap analysis against the Rainbow Tick accreditation requirements to identify short-falls and areas for future focus, some issues are readily identified; including use of particular helpline services in community engagement, recognising the specific ways of communicating with different people in the LGBTQAI+ community, and reducing discrimination in health care. The Rainbow Tick project is yet to be established; governance will be reviewed and proposed to Ahpra National Executive.
- the unnecessary and complex terminology and lack of plain English used in documents in the National Scheme
- the lack of consistency regarding different terms used with the National Scheme to name different community groups, with some terms such as vulnerable or disadvantaged considered disrespectful. It was agreed that the CAC lead a project recommending a list of preferred terms and words to be used about different communities to the National Executive to be used by Ahpra and National Boards.
- the purpose of the above project is to create meaningful change within the National Scheme to ensure that access, equity and inclusion is embedded in all activities within Ahpra and National Boards. , a commitment to equitable and inclusive practice will help strengthen relationships with co-regulatory partners, local service providers, peak organisations and the community.
- the long-standing desire to support and connect with community members on National Boards. The CAC is distanced from their priorities, and do not know if the mix of members is changing, is it more diverse and what their connections with community are expected to be, especially their knowledge of priority communities. It was agreed for the Chair to undertake a project of identifying and examining the different community voices within the Scheme to seek connection and perhaps to arrange a workshop at the NRAS conference.
- the Psychology Board of Australia public consultation on updating the general registration competencies
- the Medical Board of Australia public consultation on the proposal to recognise Genetic pathology as a new field of specialty practice
- the NRAS conference to be held from 9-11 October 2023 a new CAC representative was nominated to join the working committee
- summaries of updates from a range of National Scheme meetings attended by CAC representatives including the Ahpra Board, Forum of NRAS Chairs, Consumer health complaints reference group, Research Evaluation Committee, and the Notifier Support Service Steering Committee.

The next meeting of the Community Advisory Council is confirmed for 27 April 2023, via Microsoft Teams.

Patricia Hall

Chair
Community Advisory Council