



Australian Health Ministers' Conference

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

National registration and accreditation scheme for health professions: Health Ministers outline consultation arrangements

Health Ministers have announced today the arrangements they will put in place to ensure that professions, consumers, registration boards and education providers, as well as members of the general public, will have the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the new national registration and accreditation scheme. The new scheme was agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at its meeting on 26 March 2008.

Ministers will use as their guiding principles in developing the legislation and the scheme that the safety of the public is paramount, that high quality health care must be protected and advanced and that governments should be accountable and processes transparent. The implementation arrangements and the new scheme itself are designed to ensure consultation on key matters.

In announcing the consultation arrangements at a national forum convened in Canberra on 4 September 2008, Ministers noted that the national forum, and forums in each State and Territory being held in August and September, are just the beginning of the process of consultation and engagement.

To implement the scheme, national legislation will be introduced in the Queensland Parliament in two stages. The first stage will cover the provisions of the COAG Agreement and will be introduced in the Queensland Parliament in October 2008.

The second stage, to be introduced in the Queensland Parliament in August 2009, will cover matters where further work and discussion is required beyond the terms of the COAG Agreement. These include: details of registration and accreditation arrangements, complaints and enforcement arrangements, and privacy and information sharing arrangements, as well as other matters.

Ministers have today given a commitment that consultation papers on all these issues will be available over the next three months, with the opportunity for anyone to provide a submission if they wish. All submissions will be due before the end of 2008 with different dates for different topics. In the case of two issues, complaints and enforcement arrangements and privacy and information sharing arrangements, two national public consultation meetings will be held, one in October and one in November 2008. Details of the consultation timeline are attached.

When the feedback and submissions have been analysed, Ministers will develop a final set of proposals for the overall policy directions for the second piece of legislation. Ministers have today committed that these proposals will also be made available for comment. A national forum and State and Territory forums will be held in March 2009 to discuss the proposals and submissions can be made on any further adjustments required.

Ministers noted that a public call for submissions has already been made on the question of whether professions currently regulated only in some States and Territories should be included in the new national scheme. Submissions on this matter are due by Friday, 3 October 2008.

Ministers are also committed to consultation on matters not covered in the legislation. They are committed to involving the professions, the existing registration boards, accreditation bodies and education providers in designing the transition arrangements for the new scheme.

To ensure full engagement of the existing State and Territory boards in the ten professions to be covered by the new scheme on 1 July 2010, a national Registration Reference Group has been set up to provide advice. There will also be a Transition Coordination Group in each State and Territory, comprising all the ten boards and the local health department. A transition coordinator will be funded by governments in each State and Territory to assist the process of planning for the transition.

Ministers also noted that the website www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp will carry all policy papers as they are issued as well as calls for submissions and information sheets on the new scheme and the implementation process.

Canberra
4 September 2008

Consultation timeline

2008

July	Call for Submissions on Partially Regulated Professions
August	Bill A Consultation Paper issued
August/ September	National, State and Territory Forums
September	Submissions on Bill A paper due Consultation Paper on Registration Arrangements issued
October	Consultation Paper on Complaints and Enforcement functions issued Consultation Paper on Accreditation Arrangements issued National Forum on Complaints and Enforcement functions Submissions on Partially Regulated Professions due Submissions on Registration Arrangements due Submissions on Complaints and Enforcement functions due
November	Consultation Paper on Privacy and Information Sharing Arrangements issued National Forum on Privacy and Information Sharing Arrangements Consultation Paper on Other Matters to be Covered in Bill B issued Submissions on Accreditation Arrangements due Submissions on Privacy and Information Sharing Arrangements due
December	Submissions on Other Matters to be Covered in Bill B due

2009

March	Consultation Paper on Overall Policy Directions and Responses on Issues Raised Relating to Bill B issued National, State and Territory Forums to discuss overall policy directions paper Submissions on Overall Policy Directions and Responses on Issues Raised Relating to Bill B due
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