

Completion of the Independent Accreditation Systems Review

Professor Michael Woods, Independent Reviewer for the Accreditation Systems Review within the National Registration Scheme for health professions ('the Accreditation Systems Review') submitted his final report titled: "*Australia's Health Workforce: strengthening the education foundation*" to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) on 30 November 2017.

The Accreditation Systems Review was commissioned by AHMAC in October 2016 following a request by Health Ministers for a more comprehensive review of accreditation processes within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions (NRAS). Health Ministers noted the findings from the 2014 Independent Review of NRAS which advised of significant concerns with the high cost, lack of transparency, accountability, duplication and approach of the existing accreditation processes.

Health Ministers requested further investigation including consideration of the findings of the 2005 Productivity Commission Report on *Australia's Health Workforce*. In particular, the Accreditation Systems Review was to address:

- the cost effectiveness of the existing systems for the delivery of accreditation functions
- governance structures including reporting arrangements
- opportunities for the streamlining of accreditation including consideration of other educational accreditation processes
- the extent to which accreditation arrangements support educational innovation in programs including clinical training arrangements, use of simulation and inter-professional learning
- opportunities for increasing consistency and collaboration across professions.

The submission of the Final Report marks the conclusion of a comprehensive review process which commenced in October 2016 and included two rounds of public consultations, based on a Discussion Paper (released in February 2017) and the Draft Report (released in September 2017). Consultation forums were held each Australian state and territory and were attended by approximately 500 individuals representing more than 200 organisations.

The Review received over 114 written submissions in response to its Discussion Paper and 119 written submissions on the Draft Report. A number of individuals and organisations also made significant time available to meet with the Reviewer and his team to discuss potential improvements to the accreditation system.

Australia's health practitioners are renowned globally for the quality of care they provide, as are the education and training programs they undertake. Accreditation authorities and education providers demonstrate a high level of goodwill in working collaboratively to ensure those programs of study and training reflect contemporary practice. While these accomplishments are to be celebrated, the National Scheme must continue to mature and embrace a cycle of continuous improvement through sound internal processes. The Review considers that its final recommendations will make a substantial contribution to supporting that focus.

The maturity of national education regulatory schemes and health safety and quality systems has also provided new opportunities for removing unnecessary duplication of regulation and for more efficient and integrated delivery of functions based on expertise and consistency across both health and education.

The Independent Reviewer and the Review team thank all individuals and organisations who participated in the Review process. It was gratifying to see so many stakeholders engaging with and analysing the issues raised and providing thoughtful input, both at public forums and in submissions, into potential solutions. That input has been of great value to the Review and has helped shape its final recommendations.

Next Steps

AHMAC and Health Ministers will consider the recommendations from the Independent Reviewer over the coming months. The Final Report is expected to be publicly released following their consideration and work will then commence on the implementation of recommendations accepted by Health Ministers.

As the Review has now concluded, interested parties should access the Accreditation Systems Review webpage at <http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Projects/Accreditation-Systems-Review> for further information. The Review has also requested that public submissions to the Draft Report be made available on that webpage.