

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

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CRANAplus Feedback – Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

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Introduction

CRANApplus ensures the delivery of safe, high quality primary healthcare to remote and isolated areas of Australia. We are a grassroots, not-for profit, membership based organisation that has provided over 30 years of education, support and professional services for the nursing, midwifery and multi-disciplinary remote health workforce.

CRANApplus welcomes the proposed changes and initiatives within the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, and strongly supports the intended efforts to:

- strengthen public safety and confidence in the provision of health services
- improve the governance of the National Scheme, and
- enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme.

With a CRANApplus focus upon the health of communities and the workforce in remote and isolated practice, our feedback is directed to how the changes will support and enhance the delivery of quality primary health care in these locations.

Strengthening public safety and confidence

CRANApplus is very pleased to see a strengthened role for the regulation authorities in ensuring the development of a culturally safe and respectful health workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

As stated in the documentation the development of a culturally safe and respectful health workforce that is responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their health, will contribute to the elimination of racism in the provision of health services. CRANApplus believes that this is integral to creating a safe and secure workplace for remote health professionals and for the recipients of their care. It is also essential in supporting a diverse workforce that aligns with the communities in which services are delivered.

CRANApplus supports the reforms to strengthen the registration process namely actions regarding withdrawal of registration by a National Board if gained based on false or misleading information, the issuing of interim prohibition orders (IPO's) to unregistered practitioners, and public statements.

Improving the speed and timeliness of responses by regulation to control an identified serious risk, will protect the public and the integrity of health services and their workforces. The protections of show cause and appeal will ensure the principle of natural justice is followed.

CRANApplus believes it is critical to allow regulators to warn the public about the risks posed by a person under investigation or disciplinary proceedings, to protect remote and isolated workforces and vulnerable communities, who are particularly at risk in this matter.

Protections under section 130 of the National Law are also of critical importance to CRANApplus where the potential for offences under Scheduled Medicines Legislation that relate to administering, obtaining, possessing, prescribing, selling, supplying, or using a scheduled medicine, are an increased risk in remote and isolated practice. Disclosure of information provisions will enable employers made aware of relevant matters to strengthen public protections in their employment decisions informed by relevant information about prior or current investigations or disciplinary actions.

Improving the governance of the National Scheme

CRANApplus notes the dissolution of COAG, and the role of the Ministerial Council constituted by Health Ministers to streamline the approval processes for registration standards. We also note the change of name for the Agency Management Committee to Agency Board.

Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Scheme

CRANApplus supports all initiatives that increase the efficiency of the scheme and improve the timeliness of decisions and investigation processes to minimise the negative impacts on health professionals whilst still protecting public safety. It is important to ensure natural justice is preserved through the appropriate use of show cause and appeal. It appears that the use of undertakings rather than placing conditions on a practitioner may achieve more timely outcomes whilst still protecting the public.

Should further clarification or information in relation to feedback from this submission be sought CRANApplus would be pleased to assist. Please contact our Professional Services Team at

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