



AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF REHABILITATION COUNSELLORS LTD

Level 11, 65 York Street Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: 1800 643 155

Email: admin@asorc.org.au

www.asorc.org.au

ABN 81 442 528 153 ACN 616 971 138

**The Australian Society of Rehabilitation
Counsellors Ltd. (ASORC)**

Submission

To

**The Queensland Parliamentary
Health and Environment Committee
for**

**the Inquiry into the Health Practitioner Regulation
National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
2022 (the Bill)**

3rd June 2022

Email: hec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Committee Secretary
Health and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

ASORC submission to the Health and Environment Committee

Introduction

The Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors Ltd (ASORC) welcomes and thanks the Health and Environment Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission for the *Inquiry into the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 (the Bill)*.

For those unfamiliar with ASORC and the profession of Rehabilitation Counselling we take this opportunity to bring the following information to your attention.

Rehabilitation Counsellors are Allied Health Professionals who work within a counselling and case management framework, across the biological, psychological and social domains, to assist people with disability, health conditions and disadvantage participate in employment or education, or live independently and access services in the community to achieve their personal, educational and vocational goals.

Rehabilitation Counsellors possess advanced skills in personal counselling, (including adjustment to disability counselling), vocational assessment, vocational training, job placement, case management, injury prevention and management, service coordination and independent living planning. This provides Rehabilitation Counsellors with a deep understanding of the impact of disability, health conditions and disadvantage on a person's life, and especially the importance of work and education in attaining inclusion and fostering independence and self-esteem. Consequently, Rehabilitation Counsellors are highly qualified to provide services that are often not in the repertoire of other allied health professions.

Rehabilitation Counselling is concerned with a whole of person and biopsychosocial approach, drawing on a large discipline-specific body of knowledge in health science, disability management, vocational rehabilitation and human services. This makes Rehabilitation Counsellors highly skilled in areas such as:

- personal counselling
- vocational assessment, counselling and training
- job placement and aptitude matching
- adjustment to disability counselling
- motivational interviewing
- psychosocial assessment
- case management
- service coordination
- injury prevention and management
- mental health services
- independent living planning
- hearing services
- services for the ageing
- conflict resolution and negotiation

ASORC is the peak professional body representing Rehabilitation Counsellors throughout Australia and has been doing so since it was established in 1976. ASORC is a non-party political, non-sectarian and not for profit organisation. Its mission is to promote the profession of Rehabilitation Counselling and to foster the professional capability of its members.

ASORC provides:

- a long standing and respected voice for the profession (over 45 years since inception)
- resources, education, mentoring and supervision necessary for members to achieve career advancement and enhanced credibility in the profession and in the community
- a robust set of Competencies for Rehabilitation Counsellors and Code of Ethics
- access to the latest research and academic commentary through the ASORC Journal, the *Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*
- access to a network of similarly skilled and like-minded professionals across Australia.

ASORC recognises that as per the Statement of Compatibility, The Bill amends the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law), as agreed by Australian Health Ministers on 18 February 2022 to strengthen public protection and increase public confidence in health services provided by practitioners registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions (National Scheme). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this submission to the Health and Environment Committee.

ASORC response to Bill Amendments:

ASORC supports the following:

Part 21 Interim prohibition orders

- introducing a power for national regulators to issue interim prohibition orders to prohibit or restrict unregistered practitioners from providing health services or using protected titles, similar to the power already given to the Health Ombudsman in Queensland

Part 23 Public Statements

- introducing a power for the Health Ombudsman and national regulators to issue public statements about persons whose conduct poses a serious risk to public health and safety

Recommendations

ASORC is the peak national membership body for the Rehabilitation Counselling profession which is an unregistered allied health profession. ASORC's policies and procedures are akin to the intentions of the bill so far as our code of conduct and professional standards.

ASORC would seek cooperation and coordination from the Health Ombudsman and the relevant national regulator where a Rehabilitation Counsellor (defined as an unregistered practitioner) who is a member of ASORC, is under investigation to be prohibited or restricted to practice.

We seek this cooperation as we may well be completing our own investigation or alternatively could assist with relevant investigations. For example, if we are alerted to any breach that a member has made relating to the Code of Ethics and their conduct.

We would also seek this information to ensure that we are able to appropriately manage the individual circumstances and impact on their ASORC membership.

ASORC supports the Bill to ensure consistency across unregistered and registered allied health professionals, on the proviso that ASORC and the Health Ombudsman (at the very least) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with respect to information sharing regarding the conduct of Rehabilitation Counsellors.

For further information or to contact ASORC:

ASORC National Office
Level 11, 65 York Street Sydney NSW 2000
admin@asorc.org.au
1800 643 155