



UPDATE FROM INDEPENDENT REVIEW LEAD PROFESSOR MARK CORMACK

The Scope of Practice review has covered a lot of ground since I last provided an update in January – both figuratively and literally.

On 23 January 2024 I released the review's Issues Paper #1, which explored five key themes that emerged from the first phase of the review. These were legislation and regulation, employer practices and settings, education and training, funding policy, and technology.

These themes shaped the public consultation and stakeholder engagement that took place in this second phase of the review.

Following the paper's release, I embarked on a series of national consultation sessions across 9 cities in 8 jurisdictions as well as two virtual rural and remote roundtables. I engaged with more than 500 participants through these stakeholder activities. I made virtual presentations in major webinar events for GPs and other specialists, nurses and midwives, and consumers. I have presented at more than a dozen forums for groups including expert panels, policy advisory bodies, national health boards and accreditation board chairs, professional associations, jurisdictions and academic groups.

At the close of public consultation on Issues Paper 1 more than 250 submissions have been received. This builds on more than 700 submissions received in Phase 1.

I was delighted with the stakeholder response to the national consultation sessions. They were an integral element of Phase 2 of the review and a vital opportunity to communicate and discuss Issues Paper #1 with people around Australia. Participants in these forums included organisational representatives of the health workforce, individual health practitioners, state and territory policy officials, regulators, insurers, First Nations professionals and providers, and consumer representatives.

The feedback from the consultation sessions, together with the public submission process and additional stakeholder engagement, have provided a rich source of data which will continue to inform emerging policy solutions and subsequent phases of the review.

An intensive program of work over the next two months is expected.

First up, our research partners are finalising an extensive and comprehensive literature review that encompasses:

- the essential value of health professionals working to their full scope of practice in primary care; and

- the barriers, enablers, and regulatory settings to be addressed to support full scope of practice.

The research team is also analysing stakeholder submissions and consultation discussions, and documenting emerging themes and issues raised in stakeholder consultations across the first phases of the review. These will inform a range of potential policy solutions that I will be setting out in Issues Paper #2.

Engagement for the review will continue with additional webinars and discussion sessions for numerous stakeholder groups, including allied health professionals, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, medical practitioners, private health insurers, medical indemnity insurers, consumers, and First Nations stakeholders. The intent of these sessions is to test some areas of consensus and difference that emerged from the Phase 2 consultations.

Phase 3 will commence with the release of Issues Paper #2 in April. Its release will be followed by a third call for submissions, and a further round of consultations to run from June through to July 2024.

As I reflect on the most recent public submission process and the experience of our national consultation sessions, I would like to extend my thanks to all who participated for your contributions thus far. I'd like to encourage your continued engagement and active participation. Your ongoing commitment is instrumental in creating a sustainable and resilient healthcare system.

If you would like to be added to the review's contact list, please email scopeofpracticereview@health.gov.au. Thank you for being essential partners in this process.

Best regards,

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