



9 February 2023

The Hon Yvette D'Ath  
 Minister for Health and Ambulance Services  
 Chair, Health Ministers' Meeting  
 Via email: [NationalHealthSecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NationalHealthSecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon Mark Butler MP  
 Minister for Health and Aged Care  
 Via email: [Minister.Butler@health.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Butler@health.gov.au)

Dear Ministers

**Invitation for Ahpra to appear at Senate estimates – intention to accept**

I write regarding the invitation of the Community Affairs References Committee (the Committee) to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to appear at its upcoming supplementary Senate Estimates hearing on 16 February 2023.

The invitation follows our appearance at the November 2022 Senate Estimates hearings. Following our appearance, Ahpra also responded to a series of questions on notice submitted to the Department of Health and Aged Care by Senators.

Ahpra is advised that to assist with the Committee's scrutiny and oversight of the Health and Aged Care portfolio and Ahpra's role in ensuring the public has access to a safe health workforce, the Committee also agreed to invite Ahpra representatives to appear at the Budget Estimates hearing scheduled for 30 May to 2 June 2023.

Ahpra has been asked to respond by Monday 13 February 2023. I propose to accept the invitation to appear at both estimates hearings, unless it is the view of the Ministerial Council, as the principal governing body of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, that we should not.

I consider that appearing before the Committee will aid transparency and provide a further opportunity to respond to questions that Senators have about the National Scheme and health practitioner regulation.

If you have any queries or I can assist further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

*Martin Fletcher*

**Martin Fletcher**  
 Chief Executive Officer

CC:  
 Dr David Russell-Weisz PSM, Chair, Health Chief Executives Forum. [david.russell-weisz@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:david.russell-weisz@health.wa.gov.au)  
 Prof Brendan Murphy AC, Secretary, Dept of Health and Aged Care, [Brendan.murphy@health.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.murphy@health.gov.au)

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
 National Boards  
 GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001 [Ahpra.gov.au](http://Ahpra.gov.au) 1300 419 495

Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

s22

**Subject:** FW: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

---

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 February 2023 3:51 PM  
**To:** s22 @Health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s47F; s22 @Health.gov.au>; s22 @Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks Mike, that's great news. Our story is out Monday. Will you keep this announcement for then? We think it'll have a big impact.

Thanks,  
 Emily

s47F  
 ABC Investigations  
 M: s47F  
 E: s47F

---

**From:** s22 @Health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 3:35:47 PM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** s47F >; s22 @Health.gov.au>; s22 @Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

Apologies on the delay in getting this to you.

Can we get an indication of when the story is slated to run?

**Statement attributable to the Minister for Health:**

Australians rightly expect their health practitioners to be held to the highest standard and expect regulators to protect and uphold those standards.

Malpractice and sexual misconduct in any setting is abhorrent, but particularly so in a healthcare setting, where people are often in vulnerable positions with someone they trust.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of the 850,000 registered health practitioners in Australia deserve that trust. But where practitioners abuse it, regulators must step in.

Ahpra and the National Boards operate independently under a regulatory and legislative framework that is the responsibility of all states and territories as well as the Commonwealth.

But if that framework is falling short of protecting patient safety, then Australians rightly expect governments at all levels to work to strengthen it.

I am writing to the Chair of the Health Ministers Meeting to put this issue on the agenda at our next meeting, including a rapid review of the response by jurisdictions to previous reviews.

Cheers

s22

s22

Office of the Hon Mark Butler MP  
Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: s22

E: s22 [@health.gov.au](mailto:s22@health.gov.au)

Suite MG.50 | PO Box 6022

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

*The Office and Department of Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continued connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present.*

---

**From:** s22 [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22@Health.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2023 4:49 PM

**To:** s47F

**Cc:** s47F, s22 [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22@Health.gov.au)>, s22

s22 [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22@Health.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hey s47F

Can we push this one back to a Wednesday (tomorrow) or potentially Thursday response. Will try get you it as soon as we can.

Apologies.

s22

Media Adviser

Office of the Hon Mark Butler  
Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: s22

E: s22 [@health.gov.au](mailto:s22@health.gov.au)

---

**From:** s47F

**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2023 3:52 PM

**To:** s22 [@Health.gov.au](mailto:s22@Health.gov.au)>

**Cc:** s47F

**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22

No worries, thanks for the update.

Thanks,

s47F

**From:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2023 3:51 PM  
**To:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

Just wanted to touch base and let you know that we are still on this. Just following up some information and I'm currently chasing.

s22

**From:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 January 2023 2:28 PM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Sorry just to add – would appreciate a response by Tuesday thanks.

**From:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 January 2023 2:28 PM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi all,

Please see the below –

We have found almost 500 practitioners with proven sexual misconduct complaints against their name. Over one-third of them, including convicted paedophiles and rapists, are still registered to work. What is the Minister's response to this?

We've counted 48 independent bodies around Australia that handle patients' complaints about sexual misconduct. Is the government doing anything to address this complexity, given AHPRA was created in part to streamline this?

Under the current law, health practitioners with proven complaints of sexual misconduct can continue to work with conditions placed on their registration, such as restrictions on patients of a certain gender or age. The efficacy of these conditions has never been tested. Is this research the federal government will commission?

A practitioner who has been declared so dangerous they've been removed from the register of practitioners can return to practise in a process kept secret in every state and territory except New South Wales. The AHPRA CEO says he's open to improved transparency in this space. Is the Health Minister also supportive of legislative amendments to make this process more transparent? If so, is this something you will discuss with other Health Ministers? What will be done about this?

Recommendation 20 of Ron Paterson's Independent review of the use of chaperones to protect patients in Australia was to amend the National Law to require practitioners to disclose to patients the reasons for a chaperone or practice monitor restriction. This recommendation has only been partially implemented. Will Health Ministers amend the law so patients have to be informed about the reasons a chaperone or practice monitor is required?

Following on from the above, will Health Ministers discuss legislative change so practitioners with any restrictions related to proven complaints or active notifications of sexual misconduct are required to brief first-time patients on this?

Are Health Ministers discussing greater layperson representation on professional boards? What would this look like?

Thanks,

s47F

---

**From:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 January 2023 11:16 AM  
**To:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Four corners we just talked about [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

Thanks for your email. Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. Unfortunately with the diary it looks like the Minister won't be able to do an interview. Are you able to send through questions and we can get a statement for you.

s22

s22

Media Adviser

Office of the Hon Mark Butler  
 Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: s22

E: s22 <[REDACTED]> @health.gov.au

---

**From:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 January 2023 11:24 AM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>; s22 <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Four Corners request

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s22 and s22

As you're aware, I'm working on a Four Corners program examining health regulation in Australia. As our program will reveal, hundreds of health practitioners have been disciplined for sexual misconduct in the past decade, and a significant number are still in practise. This includes convicted rapists and paedophiles. We interviewed Martin Fletcher yesterday who explained the legislative changes needed to allow for greater transparency around Australia's registered practitioners, and for a greater consumer voice in decision-making.

Again, our preference would be to have the Minister interviewed as part of the program. Is this something we could please arrange by the end of this week? If possible, we could do the interview early next week.

Thanks,

s47F

s47F

ABC Investigations

s47F

---

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

The information contained in this email and any attachment is confidential and may contain legally privileged or copyright material. It is intended only for the use of the addressee(s). If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you are not permitted to disseminate, distribute or copy this email or any attachments. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this email from your system. The ABC does not represent or warrant that this transmission is secure or virus free. Before opening any attachment you should check for viruses. The ABC's liability is limited to resupplying any email and attachments.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

**From:** s22  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 February 2023 5:23 PM  
**To:** FIRTH, Clare  
**Subject:** FW: The Age/Sydney Morning Herald Interview Request [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

**From:** s22  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 February 2023 4:13 PM  
**To:** 'Charlotte Grieve' <charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au>  
**Subject:** RE: The Age/Sydney Morning Herald Interview Request [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Thanks Charlotte,

**Statement attributable to the Minister for Health:**

Australians rightly expect their health practitioners to be held to the highest standard and expect regulators to protect and uphold those standards.

Malpractice and sexual misconduct in any setting is abhorrent, but particularly so in a healthcare setting, where people are often in vulnerable positions with someone they trust.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of the 850,000 registered health practitioners in Australia deserve that trust. But where practitioners abuse it, regulators must step in.

Ahpra and the National Boards operate independently under a regulatory and legislative framework that is the responsibility of all states and territories as well as the Commonwealth.

But if that framework is falling short of protecting patient safety, then Australians rightly expect governments at all levels to work to strengthen it.

I am writing to the Chair of the Health Ministers Meeting to put this issue on the agenda at our next meeting, including a rapid review of the response by jurisdictions to previous reviews.

To be transparent with you – 4 Corners have been asking us similar questions and they also have the above statement.

Thanks

s22  
 Press Secretary

Office of the Hon Mark Butler  
 Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: s22  
 E: s22 @health.gov.au

PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, Australia

**From:** Charlotte Grieve <[charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 February 2023 4:05 PM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]> <[\[REDACTED\]@Health.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@Health.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: The Age/Sydney Morning Herald Interview Request [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi s22 <[REDACTED]>

The story is running in Sunday's papers.

Best,  
Charlotte

### Charlotte Grieve

Journalist



**M** 0406 305 970

**E** [charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)

**T** @CharlotteGriev1

On Thu, 2 Feb 2023 at 15:54, s22 <[REDACTED]> <[\[REDACTED\]@health.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@health.gov.au)> wrote:

Hey Charlotte,

Sorry just been side-tracked - when are you running this piece?

---

**From:** Charlotte Grieve <[charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** s22 <[REDACTED]> <[\[REDACTED\]@Health.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@Health.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: The Age/Sydney Morning Herald Interview Request [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s22 <[REDACTED]>

No worries.

Some questions:

- Does Mark Butler have any concerns about the effectiveness of AHPRA? If so, what are his top concerns?
- The 2022 Senate inquiry into AHPRA made 14 recommendations to improve the regulator's effectiveness. What has been done by the federal government/Ministerial Council in response? Which recommendations are being adopted and what is the timeline for this work?
- During the inquiry, AHPRA admitted that it regularly failed to meet requirements to provide updates about the status investigations to notifiers and practitioners. Is there any penalty for this? What is being done to address this?
- Many within the industry (doctors, lawyers, patients) have said the system is broken and successive public inquiries have failed to improve AHPRA's effectiveness. Would the government consider a royal commission into AHPRA?
- Many AHPRA investigators we have interviewed have complained of not having enough resources to complete the investigations in a thorough manner. Would the government consider providing funding to AHPRA?
- The investigators have raised concerns about AHPRA's use of "unrealistic" KPIs to encourage work to be completed quickly, leading to serious cases being rushed. Does the government support the use of KPIs in AHPRA?
- We have reported on a series of ['loopholes'](#) that have allowed practitioners' records to remain clear even if patient complaints are found to have merit. Health consumer advocates believe there is not enough transparency on AHPRA's register to enable Australians to make informed choices about their healthcare. Would the government consider requiring AHPRA to publish greater information about complaints/investigations into health practitioners?
- We have heard of a number of disturbing allegations of [systemic racism](#) within AHPRA. One key concern is AHPRA's delay in implementing a separate notification system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and practitioners. Why has this not been set up yet? Will the government push for this to be implemented?
- [We recently published this story about a Perth optometrist](#) who is still practising after he sexually harassed a teenage patient during two appointments in 2020 and 2021. AHPRA did not find the severity of his offending high enough to warrant a suspension on his practice while they investigated and they declined to report the matter to police. After a two year investigation, they required the optometrist to complete six hours of training with a mentor of his choosing. Since we have published that story, I have been contacted by other women who have described similar experiences with the same optometrist. Does Minister Butler believe this case was handled appropriately? Does he believe health practitioners should be stood down while allegations of sexual harassment are investigated?
- Investigators have raised concerns about a lack of consistency in how national boards make decisions on regulatory action, particularly in relation to non-clinical matters such as sexual assault. What does Minister Butler think of this criticism? Can anything be done to create more uniform regulations across the national boards?
- AHPRA has to get the balance right between protecting the public from harm and not unfairly harming a practitioners' reputation. Does Minister Butler believe AHPRA is getting this balance right?
- Martin Fletcher has been the CEO of AHPRA for more than 13 years. Does the government believe there needs to be fresh leadership at AHPRA?

As you can see the questions are quite detailed and extensive. Feel free to call me on 0406 305 970 to discuss.

Regards,

Charlotte

**Charlotte Grieve**

Journalist



**M** 0406 305 970

**E** [charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)

**T** @CharlotteGriev1

On Tue, 31 Jan 2023 at 13:56, s22 <[s22@health.gov.au](mailto:s22@health.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Charlotte,

Thanks for reaching out.

Unfortunately the Minister isn't going to have time this week for an on the phone interview but if you would like to send through some questions I will get you a response.

Thanks

s22

Press Secretary

Office of the Hon Mark Butler

Minister for Health and Aged Care

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH) BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

M: s22

E: s22 @health.gov.au

PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600, Australia

---

**From:** Charlotte Grieve <[charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2023 12:41 PM

**To:** s22 @Health.gov.au>

**Subject:** The Age/Sydney Morning Herald Interview Request

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s22

I'm an investigative journalist with The Age and Sydney Morning Herald.

In recent weeks, we've published a number of stories about concerns related to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), including [under-resourcing](#), allegations of [systemic racism](#) and a "[toxic culture](#)" which has left many investigators feeling as though the public is at risk as serious cases slip through the cracks.

The decision to look into AHPRA came after our papers published a number of medical investigations last year, including Adele Ferguson's investigation into the cosmetic industry, Kate McClymont's work on Charlie Teo and my own series of Munjed Al Muderis. In each case, both whistleblowers and patients felt they had no ability to challenge the actions of rogue health practitioners and raised concerns about the regulator's effectiveness.

Since we started reporting on AHPRA, we've been swamped with hundreds of emails from patients, health practitioners and AHPRA insiders who hold concerns about structural issues that are impacting AHPRA's ability to protect the public. We're going to continue reporting on this topic.

Most recently, [we published this story about a Perth optometrist](#) who is still practising after he sexually harassed a teenage patient during two appointments in 2020 and 2021. AHPRA did not find the severity of his offending high enough to warrant a suspension on his practice while they investigated and they declined to report the matter to police. After a two year investigation, they required the optometrist to complete six hours of training with a mentor of his choosing. Since we have published that story, I have been contacted by other women who have described similar experiences with the same optometrist.

I'd like to arrange an interview this week with Hon Mark Butler to discuss some of these concerns and what work is being done to improve the efficiency of AHPRA.

Is there a time this week that suits?

Please feel free to call me on 0406 305 970 to discuss.

Regards,

Charlotte

### Charlotte Grieve

Journalist



**M** 0406 305 970

**E** [charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au](mailto:charlotte.grieve@theage.com.au)

**T** @CharlotteGriev1

The information contained in this e-mail message and any accompanying files is or may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, reliance, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail or any attached files is unauthorised. This e-mail is subject to copyright. No part of it should be reproduced, adapted or communicated without the written consent of the copyright owner. If you have received this e-mail in error please advise the sender immediately by return e-mail or telephone and delete all copies. Nine Group does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in this e-mail or attached files. Internet communications are not secure, therefore Nine Group does not accept legal responsibility for the contents of this message or attached files.

"Important: This transmission is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain confidential or legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use or dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you receive this transmission in error please notify the author immediately and delete all copies of this transmission."

The information contained in this e-mail message and any accompanying files is or may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, reliance, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail or any attached files is unauthorised. This e-mail is subject to copyright. No part of it should be reproduced, adapted or communicated without the written consent of the copyright owner. If you have received this e-mail in error please advise the sender immediately by return e-mail or telephone and delete all copies. Nine Group does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in this e-mail or attached files. Internet communications are not secure, therefore Nine Group does not accept legal responsibility for the contents of this message or attached files.

The information contained in this e-mail message and any accompanying files is or may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, reliance, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail or any attached files is unauthorised. This e-mail is subject to copyright. No part of it

should be reproduced, adapted or communicated without the written consent of the copyright owner. If you have received this e-mail in error please advise the sender immediately by return e-mail or telephone and delete all copies. Nine Group does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in this e-mail or attached files. Internet communications are not secure, therefore Nine Group does not accept legal responsibility for the contents of this message or attached files.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

**From:** Martin Fletcher [s22@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:s22@ahpra.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 February 2023 6:59 PM  
**To:** NationalHealthSecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au; Minister Butler  
**Cc:** MURPHY, Brendan; David Russell-Weisz  
**Subject:** Invitation for Ahpra to appear at Senate estimates  
**Attachments:** 2023-02-09 - Correspondence to Ministers Ahpra appearance at Feb senate estimates.pdf

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister D'Ath and Minister Butler,  
 Please see attached correspondence.

Best wishes

Martin Fletcher

**Martin Fletcher**

Chief Executive Officer

Phone | +61 0457 776 250

Email | [martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au)

Web | [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

**Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency**

G.P.O. Box 9958 | Melbourne VIC 3001 | [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)



**Did you know Ahpra has a podcast?**

Listen and subscribe by searching for *Taking Care* in your podcast player (for example [Apple Podcasts](#) or [Spotify](#)), or listen on [our website](#).

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the named addressee. If you have received this email in error or you are not the named addressee notify the sender immediately and delete this e-mail. Do not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. If you are not the named addressee disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.

*Ahpra acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Elders past, present and emerging.*



s22

---

**From:** s47E(d)  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 May 2023 6:19 PM  
**To:** s47E(d)  
**Cc:** s22 e  
**Subject:** RE: AHPRA handling of sexual misconduct rapid review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks for this could you go back to Holly from Dept.

Thanks.

s22

---

**From:** s47E(d) @health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 May 2023 4:18 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) @Health.gov.au>; s47E(d) @health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22 @Health.gov.au>; s22 @Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: AHPRA handling of sexual misconduct rapid review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi team,

Please find a FAS cleared response below for this one:

**Question:**

Just wondering what came of the rapid review into the handling of sexual misconduct complaints by AHPRA? Minister Butler ordered a rapid review back in late Jan/early Feb. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/health-minister-orders-rapid-review-of-ahpra-20230202-p5chju.html>

**Response:**

At their February 2023 meeting, all Australian Health Ministers agreed that reports of professional misconduct relating to sexual boundary violations, and the ongoing registration of practitioners who have been found to have committed offences is of great concern and required a strong and urgent response.

Ministers agreed to a rapid review of Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to understand the extent to which action has been taken in response to previous reviews including on the management of professional misconduct relating to boundary violations under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. This review is due to be provided to Health Ministers in mid-2023.

Ministers also agreed to take urgent action to ensure:

- that there is transparency for patients around a practitioner's regulatory history;
- practitioners are subject to a high bar to return to practice; and
- there is community participation in decision-making to balance practitioner membership.

Action has commenced on the above measures and those outlined in Ahpra's reform blueprint. More information can be found at: [www.ahpra.gov.au/News/2023-02-24-health-ministers-back-Ahpra-reform-blueprint.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/News/2023-02-24-health-ministers-back-Ahpra-reform-blueprint.aspx).

Thanks,

s22

Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care  
 T: s22 | E: s47E @health.gov.au

---

**From:** s47E(d) [redacted] <[redacted]@Health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 May 2023 4:04 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) [redacted] <[redacted]@health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22 [redacted] <[redacted]@Health.gov.au>; s22 [redacted] <[redacted]@Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: AHPRA handling of sexual misconduct rapid review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

We got this one in earlier too.

Thank you. I'll ask her deadline and get back to you

---

**From:** s47F [redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 May 2023 2:30 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) [redacted] <[redacted]@Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** AHPRA handling of sexual misconduct rapid review

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi,

Just wondering what came of the rapid review into the handling of sexual misconduct complaints by AHPRA? Minister Butler ordered a rapid review back in late Jan/early Feb. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/health-minister-orders-rapid-review-of-ahpra-20230202-p5chju.html>

Thanks,

s47F [redacted]

Journalist



M: s47F [redacted]

E: s47F [redacted]

The Moose Republic

209/59 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, Sydney, NSW, 2016

*I work on Gadigal land*

s22

**From:** s47E(d)  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 3:41 PM  
**To:** s47F; s47E(d)  
**Subject:** RE: Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Yep – a rapid review of the response by jurisdictions to previous reviews.

---

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 3:39 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) @Health.gov.au  
**Subject:** Re: Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Many thanks, that helps. I'll update the quote to reflect that.  
 So just to clarify, Mr Butler is going to order the rapid review?  
 thanks,  
 s47F

---

**From:** s47E(d) @Health.gov.au  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 3:36 PM  
**To:** s47F  
**Cc:** s47E(d) @Health.gov.au  
**Subject:** RE: Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

Thanks,

This same statement was sent to the Herald. We can now update it from 'writing' to 'I have written'

s22

---

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 2:26 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) @Health.gov.au  
**Subject:** Re: Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi there,  
 I'm wondering whether you could clarify something for me in the statement from Minister Butler regarding AHPRA.  
 In this part of the statement, he refers to a rapid review.

*I am writing to the Chair of the Health Ministers Meeting to put this issue on the agenda at our next meeting, including a **rapid review** of the response by jurisdictions to previous reviews.*

The Sydney Morning Herald has reported that Mr Butler has already ordered a rapid review. Could you please clarify for me whether he has ordered it, or is calling for one?

Many thanks,

s47F

---

**From:** s47E(d) <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 1:14 PM  
**To:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** s47E(d) <[REDACTED]> @Health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review [SEC=OFFICIAL]

You don't often get email from [minister.butler.media@health.gov.au](mailto:minister.butler.media@health.gov.au). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi s47F

**Statement attributable to the Minister for Health:**

*Australians rightly expect their health practitioners to be held to the highest standard and expect regulators to protect and uphold those standards.*

*Malpractice and sexual misconduct in any setting is abhorrent, but particularly so in a healthcare setting, where people are often in vulnerable positions with someone they trust.*

*There is no doubt that the vast majority of the 850,000 registered health practitioners in Australia deserve that trust.*

*But where practitioners abuse it, regulators must step in.*

*Ahpra and the National Boards operate independently under a regulatory and legislative framework that is the responsibility of all states and territories as well as the Commonwealth.*

*But if that framework is falling short of protecting patient safety, then Australians rightly expect governments at all levels to work to strengthen it.*

*I am writing to the Chair of the Health Ministers Meeting to put this issue on the agenda at our next meeting, including a rapid review of the response by jurisdictions to previous reviews.*

s22

Media Adviser

Office of the Hon Mark Butler  
 Minister for Health and Aged Care

M: s22

E: s22 <[REDACTED]> @health.gov.au

---

**From:** s47F <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 February 2023 12:36 PM  
**To:** s47E(d) <[REDACTED]> @health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Australian Doctor Group media query about statement re AHPRA urgent review

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi there s22

Many thanks for chatting just now about the statement from Mr Butler about his call for an urgent review of AHPRA, in light of the 4Corners/Age/SMH investigation into medical professionals who continue practising despite being sanctioned for sexual misconduct.

Would you be able to provide me with that statement please? I'm writing a story for 6minutes about it today.

Many thanks,

s47F

s47F

6minutes

T s47F E s47F

Level 2, 26-32 Pyrmont Bridge Road, Pyrmont NSW 2009



AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR GROUP

Doctor. observer How to Treat. 6minutes Pharmacy News

"Important: This transmission is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain confidential or legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use or dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you receive this transmission in error please notify the author immediately and delete all copies of this transmission."

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH) BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 February 2023 10:19 AM  
**To:** Minister Butler  
**Subject:** Review of AHPRA

REMINDER: Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Minister Butler,

I have read in the Sydney Morning Herald that you are proposing a "rapid review" of the health regulator for most of Australia, namely AHPRA.

I would be delighted to discuss with you or your delegate ways in which I may be able to assist the review team.

1) s47F  
 . I, therefore, bring to the table two essential skills for a rapid review, an understanding of the health regulatory system (and some of its gaps) and also, importantly, a community perspective.

2) I have expertise in governance, s47F  
 (so I have an appreciation of health issues in remote Australia and associated health regulatory issues), s47F

3) I have expertise in reviews involving the government sector. My firm undertook the review of the s47F  
 . We have undertaken multiple reviews of service delivery and governance issues in the NSW Health system.

4) I have my own complex health issues, so I have a personal experience of what represents good and poor health care.

s22

I believe my knowledge, experience and community focus would greatly add to your proposed rapid review. My LinkedIn profile is up to date.

The best number to contact me on is my mobile number.

Kind regards

s47F

Sent from my iPad

s22

**From:** s47F  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 February 2023 7:02 AM  
**To:** s47F; s22; FIRTH, Clare;  
s47F; MARTIN, Nick  
**Cc:** s22  
**Subject:** HMM 24 February 2023 [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** HMM - 24 Feb 2023 - Agenda - Final.docx

Hi team

The final HMM agenda is attached for Friday 24 February 2023.

Key changes:

- s47B(b)
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Let me know if you have any questions as the papers come through from the Department.

s47F

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

s22

**From:** s22  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 February 2023 7:28 PM  
**To:** MARTIN, Nick; s47F; FIRTH, Clare  
**Cc:** CLAY, Mike; CARUSO, Lucy  
**Subject:** FW: Correspondence from Ahpra for HCEF [SEC=OFFICIAL, ACCESS=Legislative-Secrecy]  
**Attachments:** 2023-02-10 - Correspondence to HCEF.pdf  
  
**Importance:** High

---

**From:** WILLIAMS, Matthew <Matthew.Williams@health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 February 2023 7:26 PM  
**To:** s22 @Health.gov.au  
**Subject:** Fwd: Correspondence from Ahpra for HCEF [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22

This is all I have with some suggestions from Ahpra about what they think can be done. I spoke to Brendan and he said Ahpra possibly attending the HMM (virtually) was suggested. I think Brendan will ask the Minister. We will combine their ideas and those of jurisdictions into a brief for the minister.

Let me know if you need anything.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** MURPHY, Brendan <[Brendan.Murphy@health.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Murphy@health.gov.au)>  
**Date:** 10 February 2023 at 22:39:04 AEDT  
**Subject:** Fwd: Correspondence from Ahpra for HCEF [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**To:** Martin Fletcher <[Martin.Fletcher@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:Martin.Fletcher@ahpra.gov.au)>, s47F

s47F

s47F, WILLIAMS, Matthew  
<[Matthew.Williams@health.gov.au](mailto:Matthew.Williams@health.gov.au)>, SHAKESPEARE, Penny  
<[Penny.Shakespeare@health.gov.au](mailto:Penny.Shakespeare@health.gov.au)>, EXELL, Blair  
<[Blair.EXELL@Health.gov.au](mailto:Blair.EXELL@Health.gov.au)>, CAHILL, FIFINE <[Fifine.Cahill@health.gov.au](mailto:Fifine.Cahill@health.gov.au)>

Thanks Martin. This is very helpful. Am circulating directly to CEs as the paper are now out for Monday's meeting. Be useful background for our discussion on Monday.

I think at Estimates, it would be helpful for you to be able to discuss potential reform opportunities

Brendan Murphy  
Secretary  
Dept. Health

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Martin Fletcher <[Martin.Fletcher@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:Martin.Fletcher@ahpra.gov.au)>

**Date:** 10 February 2023 at 5:56:50 pm AEDT

**Subject:** Correspondence from Ahpra for HCEF

**To:** s47F  
s47F MURPHY, Brendan  
<[Brendan.Murphy@health.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.Murphy@health.gov.au)>, s47F  
s47F

**Cc:** NationalHealthSecretariat

<[NationalHealthSecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NationalHealthSecretariat@health.nsw.gov.au)>

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear s47F and Brendan,

Please find further correspondence from Ahpra in relation to regulation of health practitioners which I hope might usefully inform the HCEF discussion on these issues.

As Brendan flagged, I have been invited to Senate Estimates on Thursday 16 February and I would look to speak to a number of these reform options as I will undoubtedly be asked about the Four Corners program and wider media reporting about Ahpra. I am keen to be able to speak to a positive narrative about reform options and would welcome any advice from HCEF on what is proposed.

Many thanks

Martin

**Martin Fletcher**

Chief Executive Officer

Phone | +61 0457 776 250

Email | [martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au)

Web | [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

Australian **Health Practitioner** Regulation Agency

G.P.O. Box 9958 | Melbourne VIC 3001 | [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)



**Did you know Ahpra has a podcast?**

Listen and subscribe by searching for *Taking Care* in your podcast player (for example [Apple Podcasts](#) or [Spotify](#)), or listen on [our website](#).

#### CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the named addressee. If you have received this email in error or you are not the named addressee notify the sender immediately and delete this e-mail. Do not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. If you are not the named addressee disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.

Ahpra acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Elders past, present and emerging.



[SEC=OFFICIAL]

[SEC=OFFICIAL]

[SEC=OFFICIAL]

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE







THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED UNDER  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982 (CTH)  
BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE