



Health Chief Executives' Forum Communique

Appointment of an Independent Reviewer to examine the complexity of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

The Health Chief Executives' Forum (HCEF) is pleased to announce that Ms Sue Dawson has been appointed as the Independent Reviewer to lead a review of the regulatory complexity of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (Complexity Review).

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme must continue to meet community expectations to keep Australians safe through ensuring consistent and appropriate regulation of their health practitioners.

In response to media concerns about the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and its management of professional misconduct by health practitioners, Health Ministers agreed to undertake an independent review of its regulatory systems and processes. The review will identify areas of unproductive and unnecessary complexity and recommend changes to improve regulatory outcomes.

On 11 April 2024, the Health Chief Executives' Forum approved the appointment of Ms Sue Dawson as the Independent Reviewer to lead the Complexity Review.

Ms Dawson, the former NSW Health Care Complaints Commissioner, has significant experience and knowledge of the complaints, notifications and regulatory decision-making processes under the National Scheme. Prior to her former role, Sue occupied senior roles in the NSW and Commonwealth public sectors and has also worked in the non-government sector. Sue brings a wealth of experience specialising in the design and operation of regulatory frameworks, with a focus on practical and innovative solutions that deliver better outcomes for the community.

The aim of the Complexity Review is to ensure the National Scheme is fit for purpose with consistent decision-making and is supported by an efficient complaints management and disciplinary process. The review will also consider the appropriateness of entry criteria for new professions and options for a stewardship approach to improve the overall responsiveness and management of the National Scheme. The Terms of Reference are provided below.

The Complexity Review will be undertaken in stages with a final report expected by the end of 2024. Stakeholders from a broad range of relevant organisations will have the opportunity to be engaged to ensure the recommendations are practical, actionable and respond to community requirements.

NRASComplexityReview@health.gov.au

Terms of Reference

The Review of Regulatory Complexity of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme by an Independent Reviewer will:

1. Identify options to streamline and harmonise decision-making by existing regulatory bodies to improve consistency in the regulation of practitioner conduct, performance and impairment, including considering a reduction in the number of decision-making bodies within the National Scheme.
2. Consider measures that would deliver more consumer driven, consistent, accessible, and efficient complaints management and disciplinary processes through the National Scheme.
3. Consider how regulatory decisions, particularly those relating to professional misconduct, under the National Law are considered by civil and administrative tribunals in each jurisdiction, and whether there are options within the National Law or more broadly to ensure greater consistency of decision making.
4. Review current regulatory performance principles for the National Scheme to ensure that they align with Scheme objectives and guiding principles and make recommendations on improvements to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and promote a stewardship approach, without adding unnecessary complexity (Kruk Review recommendations 27 & 28).
5. Consider whether the National Scheme entry criteria as specified in the *Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions* are still fit for purpose, including what mechanisms for admission of future professions and establishment of future Boards will best support further expansion of the National Scheme, particularly in relation to allied health professions.
6. Consider whether Health Ministers have sufficient powers to direct entities exercising accreditation functions under the National Law, in accordance with their functions described in Part 2 of the National Law.

*Noting co-regulatory jurisdictions (NSW and QLD) are out of scope for elements 1-3.