



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Allied Health Industry Reference Group

Meeting Fourteen: 3 June 2025 – Summary of Outcomes

The Australian Government Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO) convened the 14th Allied Health Industry Reference Group (AHIRG) meeting, held virtually, on 3 June 2025.

Topics discussed:

- The CAHO confirmed the AHIRG has been approved to be extended for a 2-year term and provided updated Terms of Reference.
 - The Secretariat will contact member organisations for nominations shortly.
 - Nil comments on the updated Terms of Reference.
- Nick Morgan (Assistant Secretary, Primary Care & Workforce Reviews Taskforce) presented on the Primary Care and Workforce Reviews Taskforce and sought perspectives from AHIRG on some of the priority areas arising from the reviews commissioned under Strengthening Medicare, including improving access in areas of need; blended funding; scope of practice reforms; digital and data to support team-based care; and change management.
 - The Taskforce was established to develop consolidated advice to the Government across reviews. It will not develop a recommendation-by-recommendation response to each review.
 - The Taskforce has established an Expert Panel that meets monthly to discuss and inform draft proposals to implement the reviews. Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) is a member of this group.
 - Jurisdictions will be engaged on relevant review recommendations, and targeted engagement with key stakeholder groups will also occur on an as-needed basis.
 - The taskforce anticipates providing a draft plan to Government at the end of 2025 and, pending Government agreement, potential early deliverables in 2026.
 - Members discussed the priority areas and considerations in the context of the current allied health landscape and new reforms.
 - Considerations included the need to liaise with rural and remote organisations; being aware of unintended consequences of the impact on private entities and the flow-on effect to rural and remote communities; state and territory governments being providers of last resort when it's not viable for private providers to operate businesses; barriers to virtual access; blended funding and enablers; building multidisciplinary teams based on the skills and competencies required depending on health conditions.
- Alex Nikro (Director, MBS Primary Care Section, MBS Policy & Reviews Branch) provided an update on the [Review of MBS allied health chronic disease management services](#).
 - The working group has met 4 times to date, with the last meeting on 8 May 2025.
 - The working group commenced with group therapy, drawing on an umbrella review and other government-funded group therapy programs.
 - A research team has been engaged to undertake qualitative research of peak, provider and patient views and experiences of the items.
 - A separate qualitative research piece is being planned for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health peaks, providers and patients.

- Additionally, a rapid review of the evidence base will be undertaken.
- Once the research outputs have been completed, the working group will formulate draft recommendations for the MRAC; subject to endorsement and or refinement, these will be circulated for targeted and public consultation.
- Members were supportive that additional research was being conducted before recommendations are made.
- Members suggested the need to consider how this review might impact employment in the allied health sector and reiterated the need to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as Indigenous Allied Health Australia.
- Alex Powell (Director, Digital Transitions Section, Digital and Service Design Branch) provided an overview of the 'my health' app – Care Teams project. This initiative is delivering a multidisciplinary care feature in the my health app, designed to help consumers form and manage their care team in a way that supports improved collaboration between care team members.
 - The Department is working with the Australian Digital Health Agency on this project.
 - Discovery work will continue next financial year to consider allied health views.
- Update on the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy:
 - A consultant is being engaged to assist in finalising the Strategy with the Steering Group before progression through the governance framework for endorsement.
- The CAHO provided an update on the departmental name change.
 - The department is now called the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
 - The remit of the department's portfolio has been expanded to include
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and foundational supports, services and policy for carers
 - National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
 - NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
 - Hearing Australia.
 - Members queried whether this change would have an impact on the National Allied Health Workforce Strategy. The CAHO anticipated that bringing disability colleagues into the department would streamline engagement with this sector.
- The CAHO discussed the next AHIRG meeting tentatively scheduled for 16 September 2025.
 - The next AHIRG meeting will be in Canberra and is open to the wider allied health sector by invitation.
 - The location and date are to be confirmed.
 - Members provided potential agenda topics for consideration.
- The CAHO thanked and farewelled Professor Faye McMillan for her membership on AHIRG as her two-year tenure as Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner (Allied Health and First Nations Health) ends. Members will be advised when a new Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner has been engaged.

Actions Register

Meeting	Action	Action Officer	Status
M14, 03/06/25	The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will contact member organisations regarding the extension of AHIRG	Commonwealth CAHO	Pending
M14, 03/06/25	Members to email the Primary Care Workforce Reviews Taskforce with further information on the priority areas under consideration.	Members	Pending
M14, 03/06/25	The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will confirm the date, location and agenda of the next meeting, which is open to members and the broader allied health sector.	Commonwealth CAHO	Pending