



APAC Board Communique

May 2017

The APAC Board Directors met in April, and also participated in our annual Board Development Day.

The focus of the Board Development Day was governance, including aspects of Directors' Duties, and the pros and cons of risk-based decision-making.

A significant part of the day was taken up with considering **APAC's response to the Accreditation Systems Review (ASR) Discussion Paper**. The Discussion Paper discusses in detail the governance arrangements for accreditation within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), and also canvasses risk-based models for accreditation.

APAC's submission to the Review will be made public in due course, but our response outlined concerns we have relating to the accreditation function's place in the NRAS system, noting that we believe insufficient attention has been given to accreditation governance arrangements and its interface with the Registration function.

We advise that APAC, along with a number of other councils, is moving to risk-based decision-making, with no particular expectation that this will reduce our costs, as opposed to increasing our effectiveness.

We caution that any move to a risk-based system requires considerable discussion: clearly, 'risk-based' means different things to different parties. APAC certainly does not see that health professional accreditation could move to an open-ended system such as that adopted by TEQSA¹: the purpose of regulating the higher risk health professions is to protect the public, and this implies regular and close attention to compliance.

APAC supports a move to outcomes-based accreditation, also supported by the ASR Paper, and our proposed new standards move towards this approach. We also welcome alignment between the professions of accreditation standards frameworks and principles. However, the competencies associated with the standards must be developed by the relevant professions, in order to maintain currency and credibility.

The NRAS has a key objective in relation to workforce flexibility.

The mode by which workforce flexibility might be achieved through accreditation has not yet been described, to our knowledge. We assert that accreditation follows from education, not the other way around. However, we support the notion that accreditation should not create barriers to innovative teaching and learning, indeed should encourage this, and our proposed new standards are designed on this basis.

Our submission discusses at length the problems we see in the current governance structure of the scheme, whereby accreditation appears to be the 'poor relation' to registration. We are firmly of the view that governance structure and policies and processes relating to accreditation need to be addressed, whether within AHPRA or as part of a separate body.

All our comments are based on our view that accreditation of health professional education plays a significant role in protecting the public.

¹ TEQSA, *Risk Assessment Framework*, 2016, http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/TEQSARiskAssessFramework_v2.1_2.pdf
Accessed 1 May 2017



The Board Meeting itself finalised the content of our ASR response. In addition, along with making **Accreditation Determinations**, we adopted a number of new **governance policies and procedures**: these have been developed over the past year as part of a substantial review of all of our processes.

Late in the meeting we received advice from the Psychology Registration Board on their response to our **proposed new standards**, submitted to them for approval last September. See the Standards Bulletin for April advising of progress so far. We will provide another update as soon as we have met with the Psychology Board, later this month.

At the Board Meeting, a **Motion of Condolence** was passed, to mark the recent death of Ms Helena Gillies. Ms Gillies made an immeasurable contribution to APAC and to the profession, and we will miss her.

Professor Simon Crowe

Chair APAC Ltd