

ATTACHMENT B

HEALTH WORKFORCE: NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed that a national professional registration scheme for health practitioners be established by July 2008.

The scheme would apply to the nine occupational groups that are currently subject to statutory registration in all jurisdictions. A national Multilateral Intergovernmental Agreement would underpin the scheme and identify its objectives, governance, scope, and legislative, administrative and financial arrangements. The Intergovernmental Agreement would be finalised by mid-2007 with ongoing reporting back to Senior Officials prior to the establishment of the scheme. The scheme would be enacted through either incorporation by reference or complementary legislation, with the exact mechanism to be resolved as part of implementation.

The inclusion under the scheme of other health occupations currently registered in a limited number of jurisdictions will be determined during implementation of the scheme through assessment against criteria agreed by a ministerial council comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Health Ministers, and detailed in the Intergovernmental Agreement. The subsequent inclusion of new professions will also be covered by this process.

COAG has agreed to undertake consultation with stakeholders on its preferred model, a single cross-profession national registration board that would assume ongoing administration for a consolidated national health practitioner registration scheme. The scheme would maintain a presence in each State and Territory, primarily to manage receipt and investigation of complaints/notifications and disciplinary matters regarding registered practitioners. All governments (State, Territory and the Commonwealth) would be involved in governance arrangements, with a primary policy setting, governance and implementation role for the ministerial council comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Health Ministers, to be detailed in the Intergovernmental Agreement.

In addition, the scheme would facilitate expert input on professional matters for professions covered by the scheme, to be provided through participation on profession-specific committees, panels or such other mechanisms.

Under the preferred model, the scheme would be implemented in parallel with proposed reforms to establish a national accreditation scheme, and would be self-funding, with estimated establishment costs of up to \$12.3 million over four years to be jointly funded by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

COAG has further agreed that implementation will be overseen by Senior Officials and undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders, with a report back to COAG on the consultation and the implementation approach by the end of 2006.