

## Consultation Paper

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia - Accreditation Committee Membership

24 January 2011

### Background

In July 2011, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) was established by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council).

The main role of the Board is to protect the public which it does by setting standards and policies that all registered health practitioners must meet.

One of the key tasks of the new Board, according to Section 43 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory, is to assign accreditation arrangements for the profession. The National Law says that accreditation functions can either be performed by an external accreditation entity or a committee established by the Board.

The National Board notes that there is currently no established, majority-agreed accreditation body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice in Australia. For this reason, the National Board has decided to establish an Accreditation Committee to undertake its accreditation functions.

### What is the role of the Accreditation Committee?

According to the National Law (Section 42), the role of the Accreditation Committee is to:

- develop accreditation standards to submit to the Board for approval
- assess programs of study and education providers
- make recommendations and give advice to the National Board.

### Who should make up the Accreditation Committee?

In December 2011, the National Board agreed to undertake broad consultation on the composition of the Accreditation Committee. The Board proposed that the Accreditation Committee be made up of:

- one academic
- one educationalist and
- one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

Either one or both of the academic and/or educationalist would need to have vocational education and training (VET) experience, given that that qualification for registration is delivered through the VET sector and is competency based.

The Board agreed that the Accreditation Committee should be able to co-opt further members (in consultation with the Board) as required, to assist with increased workloads or to provide alternative

members if conflicts of interests arose, but wondered whether a community representative with an understanding of the health sector should also be added to the Committee on a permanent basis.

The Board is now consulting on the membership of the proposed Accreditation Committee to help make its final decision.

### **The Board is seeking submissions on the following:**

1. Do you agree with the proposed inclusion of an academic, an educationalist and at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner?
2. Do you think a community representative should be on the Accreditation Committee?
3. Do you think anyone else should be on the committee?
4. Do you think there should be specific criteria for the selection of the above persons and if so what should they be eg VET sector experience and/or clinical experience?
5. Do you think a Board member should be on the Accreditation Committee?
6. How many members do you think the committee should have?

In considering the proposed membership, it should be noted that although including a Board member on the Accreditation Committee would facilitate communication between the Board and the committee, the National Law is clear that the intention is that the regulatory functions of the Board and the accreditation functions Accreditation Committee activities should be kept separate.

In addition, being a National Board member requires that the member has primary allegiance to the Board. There may, therefore, be a conflict of interest if a Board member is also a member of the Accreditation Committee.

### **How to make a submission**

**The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia is now seeking feedback on the membership of the Accreditation Committee.** Submissions should be sent by close of business on 15 March 2012.

Submissions by email should be titled "Membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia - Accreditation Committee" and sent to [atsihpboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:atsihpboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au).

Submissions by post should be addressed to:

Executive Officer  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia  
AHPRA  
GPO Box 9958  
Melbourne VIC 3001

The views expressed in the submissions are those of the individuals or organisations who submit them and their publication does not imply any acceptance of, or agreement with, these views by the Board.

The Board publishes submissions on its website [www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au](http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au) to encourage discussion and inform the community and stakeholders.

Submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments, or which are outside the scope of the discussion will not be placed on the Board's website, nor made available to the public. Before publication, any personally identifying information will be removed from submissions.

The Board also accepts submissions made in confidence. These submissions will not be published on the website or elsewhere. Submissions may be confidential because they include personal or other

sensitive information. Any request for access to a confidential submission will be determined in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Commonwealth), which has provisions designed to protect personal information and information given in confidence.

Please tell us if you do not want your submission published, or want us to treat any part of it as confidential. A link to the National Law is available at [www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications.aspx).