



australian healthcare &  
hospitals association

*the voice of public healthcare®*



# **AN ACCREDITATION SYSTEM FOR RURAL GENERALIST EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

Completion report

6 July 2018



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## OUR VISION

A healthy Australia, supported by the best possible healthcare system.

## OUR MISSION

To conduct research, educate and influence the healthcare system to achieve better health outcomes, improved patient and provider experience, greater equity and sustainability.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Healthcare in Australia should be:

- Effective
- Accessible
- Equitable
- Sustainable
- Outcomes-focused.

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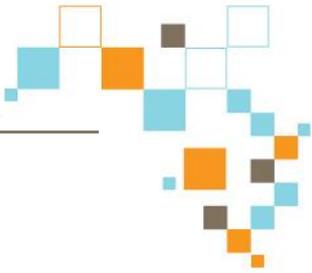
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## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) was engaged by the Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Queensland Government (AHPOQ) to develop an accreditation system for rural generalist education for seven health professions. This work is part of a national strategy led by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) to develop a rural generalist pathway for the allied health professions.

The project was undertaken between January and June 2018. The outcomes were identified broadly as:

1. Accreditation standards for education programs providing post-graduate training in rural generalist practice for the occupational therapy, pharmacy, nutrition & dietetics, podiatry, physiotherapy, speech pathology and radiography professions.
2. Comprehensive description and supporting resources that will facilitate the implementation of a governance body that is responsible for the standards and for administering the accreditation process. Implementation is to occur in a subsequent phase of the strategy.

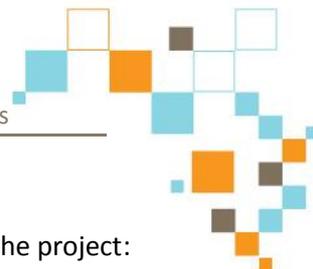
## PROJECT TEAM

The AHHA project team comprised:

Kylie Woolcock	Project Lead and Manager
Kate Silk	Stakeholder consultation, Professional expert advisor
Murray Mansell	Governance and finance expert advisor
Alison Verhoeven	Executive oversight
Gary Day	Consultant expert advisor

Additional support was also provided internally by:

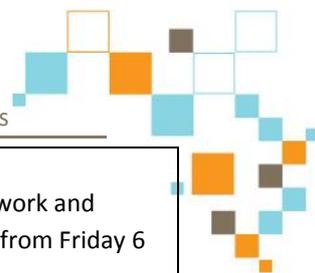
Sue Wright	Finance and administration
Matt Tabur	Governance and administration
Krister Partel	Communications



## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the Agreement, the following activities were completed as part of the project:

Description
<p><b>Project commencement</b></p> <p>Following signing of the agreement, a meeting was held between AHHA and Queensland Health to confirm project methodology, scope and outputs. Stakeholders were identified and notified of the project.</p>
<p><b>A. Implementation plan</b></p> <p>AHHA submitted an implementation plan on 9 March 2018 that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identified the stages and process for formation of an Accreditation Body as a new and independent entity</li> <li>• identified the activities, resources, milestones and estimated timelines for implementation of an accreditation system (including identifying activities requiring resourcing beyond the completion date of the project)</li> <li>• documented risks, mitigation strategies and contingencies for implementation</li> <li>• documented performance indicators and a monitoring framework for implementation</li> <li>• documented a communication and stakeholder engagement plan, including system readiness activities.</li> </ul> <p>The Implementation plan and associated documents were endorsed by the Chief Allied Health Officer on 15 March 2018, noting that they would be refined as the project progresses and submitted in a finalised form in the Completion Report.</p>
<p><b>B. Accreditation standards</b></p> <p><b>Environmental scan and review</b></p> <p>AHHA prepared an environmental scan to support discussions with the Agreement Governance Group, guide stakeholder consultation and guide the development of resources for the project. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing existing resources that support Rural Generalist Practitioners in the Allied Health Professions, including the Education Framework and Program Curriculum, and relevant quality assurance frameworks</li> <li>• reviewing relevant Australian profession entry-level and post-graduate accreditation standards; endorsement and specialisation pathways; and existing healthcare and patient safety standards</li> <li>• providing an understanding of the current context in which the accreditation system is being introduced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation A1</b></p> <p>AHHA prepared a brief information paper to support understanding of the rural generalist concept and strategy and the role of this project in moving the strategy from a funded pilot largely implemented in northern Australian public health services to a national framework.</p> <p>Together with AHPOQ and SARRAH, AHHA facilitated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a face-to-face consultation session on 26 February in Melbourne (attended by 14 representatives)</li> <li>• a face-to-face consultation session on 1 March in Sydney (attended by 11 representatives)</li> <li>• a webinar consultation session on 6 March (&gt;80 registrations)</li> </ul> <p>A recording of the presentations from the consultation sessions and a PDF of the slides were published on the AHHA website, with the link shared with stakeholders.</p> <p>AHHA also attended face-to-face meetings of the Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences on 27 February and the Australian Allied Health Leadership Forum on 28 February.</p>
<p><b>Draft accreditation standards</b></p> <p>Based on the environmental scan and review, existing resources and consultation feedback, AHHA drafted a Competency Framework and Accreditation Standards.</p>



### Consultation A2

AHHA prepared a consultation paper, which was circulated with the draft Competency Framework and Accreditation Standards, to stakeholders for comment on 6 April. The consultation period ran from Friday 6 April to Monday 30 April. Written submissions were received from those representing:

- Education providers
  - Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
  - Centre for Remote Health, a joint facility of Flinders University and Charles Darwin University
  - Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin University
  - Universities Australia
  - Australian Rural Health Education Network
- Health Services
  - Directors of Physiotherapy Services Queensland (Queensland Health and Mater Hospitals Queensland)
  - North West Hospital and Health Service Allied Health (Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology)
  - Gold Coast Health (Allied Health professionals group)
- Professional associations
  - Speech Pathology Australia
  - OT Australia
  - Chiropractors' Association of Australia
  - Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia

### Finalise accreditation standards

AHHA finalised the Competency Framework and Accreditation Standards, also developing an Evidence Guide to align with the Accreditation Standards, based on consultation feedback.

## C. Accreditation system

### Environmental scan and review of system requirements

This was prepared together with the environmental scan and review for the Accreditation Standards (see above).

### Draft accreditation system policies and procedures

AHHA drafted accreditation standards based on environmental scan and review, and relevant consultation feedback from A1.

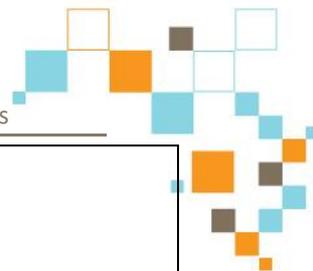
### Consultation B1

Linking with Consultation A2 for the accreditation standards, consultation questions were prepared to guide stakeholder feedback on the accreditation system policies and procedures.

A letter to key stakeholder organisations was sent on 23 March to arrange individual meetings about their interest in the accreditation system and opportunities for influence and alignment. Meetings were scheduled for 26 March to 19 April, where possible.

Interviews were held with:

- 4 Apr – Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
- 4 Apr – National Rural Health Alliance
- 5 Apr – Allied Health Professions Australia
- 5 Apr – Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council
- 10 Apr – Australian Pharmacy Council
- 10 Apr – Allied Health Professions Australia (meeting of CEOs)
- 11 Apr – Occupational Therapy Council
- 12 Apr – Australian Podiatry Association
- 16 Apr – Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- 16 Apr – Speech Pathology Australia
- 17 Apr – Dietitians Association of Australia (Executive team)
- 18 Apr – Australian Physiotherapy Association
- 18 Apr – Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia



- 18 Apr – Consumers’ Health Forum
- 19 Apr – Occupational Therapy Australia
- 30 April – James Cook University
- 11 May – Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services
- 4 June – Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences

A workshop with the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative (HPAC) Forum was also held on 18 May.

**Finalise accreditation system policies and procedures**

AHHA finalised the Accreditation System policies and procedures based on the environmental scan and review, consultation feedback, Agreement Governance Group advice and legal advice.

**D. Governance System and Resources**

Cornwall Stodart were engaged to provide legal advice for the project. An initial briefing was conducted on 23 February, with input to the implementation plan. Ongoing email contact occurred through the duration of the project, with a final meeting held 21 June.

Resources were prepared in accordance with the Implementation Plan to facilitate and oversee the formation of the accreditation body and implementation of the accreditation process.

**E. Meetings and reporting**

Development of the proposed accreditation system was guided by an Agreement Governance Group.

Membership of the Group comprised:

Julie Hulcombe (Chair)	Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland
Ilsa Nielsen	Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland
Jeff House	Services for Australian Rural & Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)
Fiona Brooke	Services for Australian Rural & Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)
Kylie Woolcock	Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
Kate Silk	Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
Rena Moore	Top End Health Services, Northern Territory Government
Prof Susan Gordon	Flinders University
Prof Jane Conway	University of New England
Dr Hwee Sin Chong	Queensland Country Practice, Queensland Health

Throughout the project, meetings were held with the Agreement Governance Group. These occurred on the following dates:

- 17 January
- 2 February
- 15 February
- 9 March
- 28 March
- 11 April (by email only)
- 9 May
- 23 May
- 20 June.

An agenda and papers were circulated prior to each meeting, and minutes maintained of discussion and decisions.



## DELIVERABLES

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

AHHA submitted an Implementation Plan and associated resources on 9 March 2018. The Implementation plan and associated documents were endorsed by the Chief Allied Health Officer on 15 March 2018, noting that they would be refined as the project progresses and submitted in a finalised form in the Completion Report.

The Implementation Plan has now been superseded by the *Governance system, business model and resources*, which include the:

- Risk management program
- Monitoring and evaluation framework
- Communication and stakeholder engagement plan.

However, as noted in the Implementation Plan, the entity to be established will be an independent legal entity; those involved (e.g. as Directors or Members) will have obligations under relevant legislation. As such, the entity, and any individuals and organisations considering involvement, will need to seek legal advice from an appropriately qualified legal practitioner when acting on recommendations contained within this Implementation Plan. The information contained in this plan is not to be construed as legal advice.

The specific deliverables identified in the original Implementation Plan are described in the sections below.

### ACCREDITATION SYSTEM: STANDARDS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Four resources have been developed to support the proposed accreditation system. They are the AHRG:

#### 1. **Competency Framework**

The AHRG Competency Framework describes the performance expected of an individual developing as a rural generalist in their chosen profession and who has completed an accredited education program. Performance is described at two levels: Level 1 and Level 2, reflecting the progression of an individual in the AHRG Pathway after achieving competence in their chosen profession.

#### 2. **Education Framework**

Developed in an earlier phase of the rural generalist strategy, the AHRG Education Framework describes unit topics recommended for inclusion in education programs in rural generalist practice for the allied health professions. For Levels 1 and 2, there is reference to service outcomes; development objectives; and sample activities. However, it is important to note, some of the content used to describe unit topics may be translatable to learning outcomes and assessment within the education program, while others relate more to the responsibility of the workplace support and supervision.



**3. Program Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide**

The AHRG Program Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide describe the qualities of an education program in rural generalist practice for the allied health professions and the education provider, and provide guidance on the evidence to be submitted by education providers in demonstrating standards are met for their education programs.

**4. Program Accreditation Handbook**

The AHRG Program Accreditation Handbook describes the policies and procedures by which the accreditation entity applies the accreditation standards when accrediting education programs.

These resources are complementary and inter-linked. Those developed as part of this project (i.e. all except the AHRG Education Framework) are included together as **Package A** and submitted with this Completion Report.

The following table provides a statement against the acceptability criteria:

Acceptability criteria	AHHA response
<p>1. Reflects current environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Accreditation System model proposed is consistent with best practice in accreditation, as recognised by entities undertaking accreditation in Australia and recent reviews that of accreditation systems in Australia</li> <li>• The Accreditation System model proposed reflects that this accreditation is neither ‘academic’ nor ‘professional’. Further, it does not have a role in regulation of scopes of practice. As such, the model proposed aligns with existing models, minimising duplication.</li> <li>• The overarching ‘Introduction’ and the ‘Background’ section for each resource provides specific detail about the underpinning rationale for how each reflects the current environment.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Reflects legal advice received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific legal advice was not sought for these resources, except where it impacts on governance structures. Legal advice is noted against the specific aspects in Package B.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Reflects stakeholder input and feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted across the professional, education, accreditation and health service sectors for the seven allied health professions included.</li> <li>• A register of written stakeholder feedback, and the AHHA response to each item, has been included in the full Completion Report submitted to the sponsor.</li> </ul>



## GOVERNANCE SYSTEM, BUSINESS MODEL AND RESOURCES

Proposing a governance system and business model for a new entity, without the specific stakeholders who will be taking on the legal, funding and operational roles, is challenging. All those involved (e.g. as Directors or Members) will independently have obligations under relevant legislation.

Draft resources to support the establishment of an entity for the proposed accreditation system have been developed, consistent with those identified in the Implementation plan. They provide a starting point for discussions with stakeholders in the establishment phase, and so should be considered with this in mind.

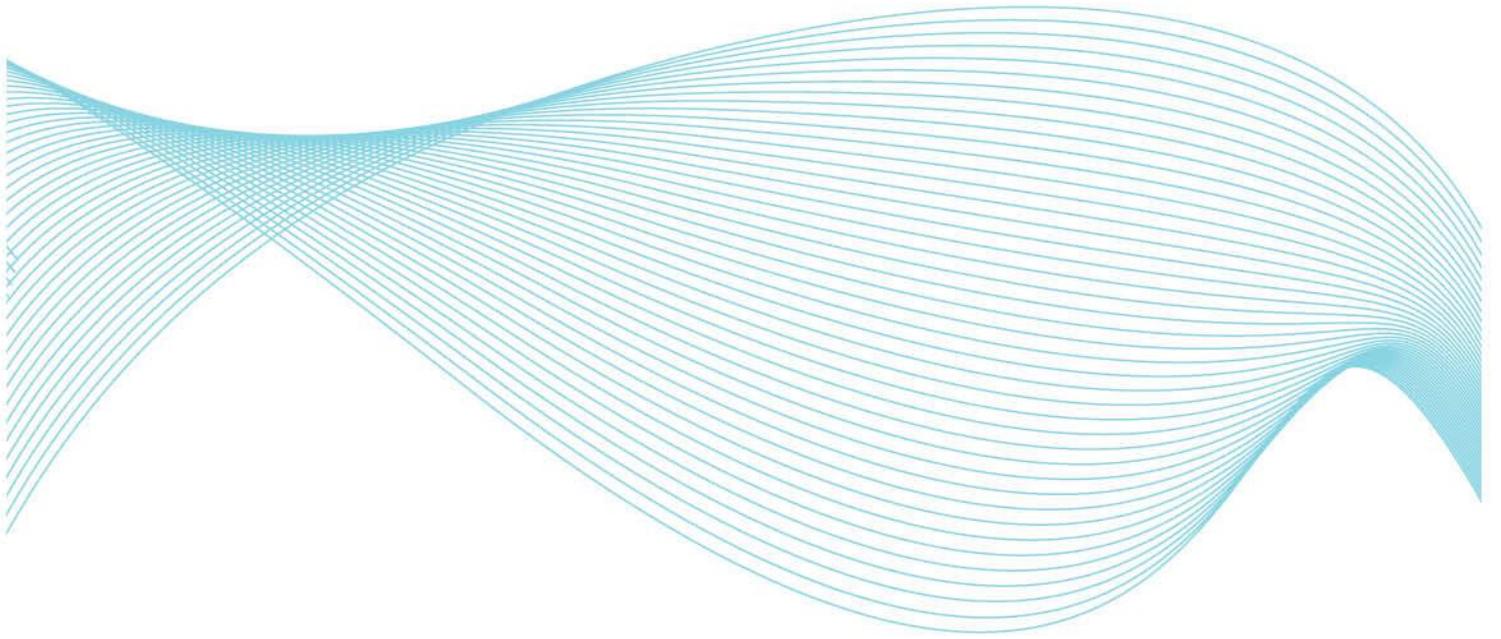
They cover:

1. Entity purpose and objectives
2. Governance and business model
3. Business plan
4. Entity name
5. Process for establishment phase.

These draft resources are included together as **Package B** and included with the full Completion Report submitted to the sponsor. Acceptability against the criteria cannot be fully assessed without the specific stakeholders involved, so acceptability considerations have been included within the Package.

## COMMUNIQUE

Content for a one-page communique to notify stakeholders of the completion of the project has been drafted and will be circulated when approved by the sponsor.



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