

9 February 2018

Ms Sarah Cowie
Director
Health and Disability Services Complaints Office
PO Box B61
Perth WA 6838

Email: yoursay@hadsco.wa.gov.au

Dear Ms Cowie

Re: Consultation Paper – National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Western Australia)

Audiology Australia (AudA) is the national professional membership association for Australian audiologists and represents over 2,600 audiologists across the country. Audiologists work with clients of all ages to help them to preserve, manage and improve their hearing and also help them with their ability to process and understand sounds. Audiologists must have completed at least the equivalent of an Australian university Masters-level degree in clinical audiology.

AudA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office's (HaDSCO) current Consultation Paper, which seeks comments on matters to be considered for the implementation of the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (National Code) in Western Australia (WA). Based on our membership database, AudA has nearly 200 members located in WA.

AudA strongly supports the implementation of the National Code in WA. It will introduce a nationally consistent set of provisions by which health care workers will be required to conduct their delivery of health services. It will also set standards against which disciplinary action can be taken, and if necessary, a prohibition order issued in circumstances where a health care worker's continued practice presents a serious risk to public health and safety. As noted in the Consultation Paper, while the vast majority of health care workers practice in a safe, competent and ethical manner, there are a small minority who present a serious risk to the public.

We also note that [AudA's Code of Conduct](#) is based on the National Code in order to provide a consistent message to our members as to the conduct expected of them as members of a self-regulating profession.

AudA supports the Consultation Paper's proposal that - following implementation of the National Code in WA - HaDSCO will be responsible for:

- receiving, assessing and investigating complaints about health care workers who have allegedly breached a provision of the National Code
- issuing prohibition orders and interim prohibition orders
- determining any conditions on practice as stated in a prohibition order or interim prohibition order
- monitoring compliance with prohibition orders and interim prohibition orders in effect and taking action for breaches of prohibition orders.

We also endorse the Consultation Paper's proposal that the National Code will be brought into effect via new regulations under the *Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995 (WA)* (HaDSC Act). This will provide a straightforward legislative model under which HaDSCO will be provided with the authority and powers necessary to administer and enforce the National Code, as well as make amendments when required.

The Consultation Paper proposes that, in accordance with the national policy framework, that WA prescribe, via regulation, the application of the National Code to any person:

- who provides a health service and is not a registered health practitioner under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.
- who is a registered health practitioner under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme but who provides a health service that is unrelated to their registration.
- who provides a health service as part of a program of study that qualifies that person as a health care worker.
- who provides a health service in their role as a volunteer recruited and supervised by an organisation that provides health services.

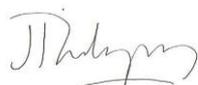
On this basis, the National Code would not only cover audiologists but also other health care workers in the hearing sector such as audiometrists and allied health assistants. We support the inclusion of these professions in the National Code.

Finally, AudA welcomes the Consultation Paper's proposals to amend the HaDSC Act to:

- alter the existing definition of a 'health service'. For the sake of national consistency, AudA considers it is important that all health care complaints regimes are as aligned as possible. We note that the definition of a 'health service' under the HaDSC Act does not currently include a health-related disability, palliative care or aged care service.
- enable the Director of HaDSCO to initiate an investigation into a matter that is not the subject of a complaint.
- enable any person – whether they are a health care worker, consumer or their representative – to make a complaint about a health care worker under the National Code.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this submission, please contact AudA's Research and Policy Manager Elissa Campbell at elissa.campbell@audiology.asn.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jason Ridgway
President
Audiology Australia