

## National registration imminent

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council last month agreed on a new National Registration and Accreditation (NRA) scheme for health professions. An exposure draft of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Bill 2009 will be released for comment later this year.

As a result of the more than 650 written submissions received in response to the consultation papers, a number of changes were made to the original proposals particularly in relation to accreditation, the role of state bodies and complaints handling.

Agreement that the accreditation function be independent of governments appears to be a win for the AMA and in particular AMA (NSW) which was the first state to flag this as a serious issue when the Productivity Commission recommended a national scheme in 2005 and proposed the abolition of the Australian Medical Council (AMC).

The Ministerial Council's statement said: "Existing external accrediting bodies such as the Australian Medical Council and the Australian Pharmacy Council are expected to continue."

However, the Ministerial Council reserved powers to act "where it believes that changes to an accreditation standard, including changes to clinical placement hours or workplace and work practice, would have a significant negative effect".

States and territories will be able to retain their role and power in disciplinary and complaints processes and retain their own professional boards alongside the national boards.

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### IN OTHER PROVISIONS:

**THERE** will be both general and specialist registers available for the professions, including medicine and dentistry, where ministers agree that there is to be specialist registration.

**THERE** will be a requirement that, for annual renewal of registration, a registrant must demonstrate that they have participated in a continuing professional development program as approved by their national board.

**FROM** 1 July 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners and medical radiation practitioners will be regulated under the scheme.

*Please see page 25 for Dr Michael Levitt's view on national registration.*

