

Communiqué: Chinese Medicine Reference Group

The third meeting of the Chinese Medicine Reference Group (the Reference Group) was held in Melbourne on 29 August 2018.

Details of membership and the terms of reference are available under the [About us](#) section on the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (the Board) website, and were noted by Reference Group members.

In attendance were:

- Reference Group Members:
 - Dr Carolyn Ee - Individual practitioner member
 - Ms Geraldine Robinson - Individual practitioner member
 - Dr Kevin Ryan - Individual practitioner member
 - Ms Dina Tsiopelas - Individual practitioner member
 - Ms Sophy Athan from the AHPRA Community Reference Group (CRG) - Community representative
 - Dr Cheryl McRae from the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) - Community representative
 - Ms Waveny Holland from the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association (AACMA) - Professional association representative
 - Ms Jeanetta Gogol from the Australian Natural Therapists Association (ANTA) - Professional association representative
 - Dr Max Ma from the Chinese Medicine Industry Council of Australia (CMIC) - Professional association representative
 - Dr Bingrong Ge from the Federation of Chinese Medicine & Acupuncture Societies of Australia (FCMA) - Professional association representative
 - Ms Nic Andronaco - Education institution representative
 - Associate Professor Tony Zhang - Education institution representative
- Professor Charlie Xue, Chair and practitioner member, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia
- Dr Diwen Lai, practitioner member, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia
- Mr David Brereton, community member, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia
- Debra Gillick, Executive Officer, Chinese Medicine, AHPRA

An apology was received from:

- Pip Brennan, The Health Consumers' Council (WA) - Community representative

Mr Brereton acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this meeting took place and paid respect to Elders past and present.

Chair of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, Professor Charlie Xue

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the third meeting, then conducted a review of the agenda for prioritisation of the discussion time.
2. No members had any potential conflicts of interest to declare related to the agenda.
3. Board progress arising from the previous meeting included:
 - further to previous discussion on reporting of adverse events by Chinese medicine practitioners, the Board published a newsletter article; held initial discussions with the TGA; plans to publish further information on prevention of burns and pneumothorax; and will soon be publishing a research report *Contributing to risk-based Chinese medicine regulation: Establishing the risk profile*.

- further work on making therapeutic claims in advertising to the public: a suite of tools has been published; education forums have been conducted in English and Chinese; and a cross-profession review of advertising guidelines is now underway.
- update on improving communication: the Board's Communication Plan was revised and tabled for comments at the meeting; a series of round-Australia forums was completed; teleconferences were held with rural/remote practitioners; a visit to practitioner group in Cairns took place; and we are exploring the preparation of webinars.
- Ms Athan raised the common issue of communication with, and support of, rural/remote practitioners at the AHPRA Community Reference Group.
- supporting students and new graduates: the Board's Executive Officer visits all the Chinese medicine education providers annually and addresses the final-year students; the Board has reduced application fees and first registration fee for new graduates by 70-80 per cent for the 2018-2019 financial year. This reduction is for graduates from the Board's accredited programs of study only.

Next term of Reference Group

4. The first meeting of the Chinese Medicine Reference Group was held on 22 February 2017, the second on 23 August 2017 and today (29 August 2018) is the third meeting in the first two-year term. The current term finishes on 22 November 2018. The Board therefore intends to repeat the EOI process and will call for expressions of interest in late September 2018.
5. Members from the professional associations and TGA representatives will continue as nominated by their organisations.
6. Existing Community members are requested to please confirm their continued interest as this would be most welcome.
7. The Education institution representatives agreed among themselves to rotate representatives.
8. The recruiting process will therefore focus on potentially refreshing the Individual Practitioner member positions, however existing Individual practitioner members are eligible and encouraged to re-apply.
9. The Board sought the Reference Group's views on the inclusion of a student on the Reference Group (to provide a student perspective, not formal representation or for stakeholder engagement). While in principle this would be desirable, a number of challenges were discussed. This will be presented to the Board for consideration.
10. Members suggested the addition of their contact details on the Board's [Chinese Medicine Reference Group webpage](#) to facilitate consultation with stakeholders. The Executive Officer is requested to contact each member about this.
11. Members agreed that it would be helpful and interesting to have a couple of 'reflection' pieces from current non-Board members of the Reference Group in the next Board newsletter to inform stakeholders about the experience of being on the Reference Group.

Information from Community representatives

AHPRA CRG member, Ms Sophy Athan

12. The Group noted a verbal report provided by Ms Athan including:
 - An update on current big issues with the CRG such as mandatory reporting, the definition of safety, cultural safety, AHPRA's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Statement of Intent.
 - Planned training in relation to cultural safety and the question of whether this should be mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all registered practitioners.
 - Important improvements to the accessibility of the AHPRA and national boards' websites.
 - Progress of much-needed improvements to AHPRA's notifications process, with some recent emphasis on the language of written correspondence with notifiers and practitioners.
 - Amendments to the National Law, in particular changes to information which can be released to notifiers.
 - Recent developments and activities to improve advertising compliance.

Information from the Therapeutic Goods Administration

Dr Cheryl McRae, Assistant Secretary, Complementary & Over the Counter Medicines Branch, TGA

13. Dr McRae gave a presentation on:

- Update on Medicines and medical devices regulation (MMDR) reforms
- Overview of the listed medicines regulatory framework
 - Permitted indications
 - Labelling and advertising requirements
 - Non-indication statements and claims
 - Market exclusivity for new ingredients
 - Proposed Claimer of pre-market evaluation of efficacy
 - Use of comparable overseas regulators
- Enhanced post-market monitoring. Interesting and lively discussion took place and Dr McRae undertook to follow up on some matters of interest to the group.

Board items and activities

Upcoming/current/recent consultations

14. David Brereton provided an update on:

- The review of the standards for CPD, Recency of Practice (ROP) and Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) and associated guidelines
- Accreditation arrangements, and
- Upcoming consultations on the shared Code of conduct, Advertising Guidelines, Supervised Practice Framework, and Limited Registration for Teaching and Research.

Update on access to restricted herbs and other matters

15. Dr Di Wen Lai provided an update on:

- The progress of a potential project on access to restricted herbs
- Amendments to the National Law

CMBA Communications Plan for feedback

16. Members agreed to review and provide feedback on the Board's Communications Plan.

Running workshops/panel discussions for practitioners at association gatherings

17. Members discussed and made suggestions for engagement with the profession.

Practitioner, Professional association and Education institution joint item

18. Members:

- Noted a presentation on informed consent by Ms Andronaco, Dr Ee, Ms Gogol and Robinson
- Agreed that it is a complex issue, and
- Agreed to continue the discussion offline and bring some information to the next meeting for sharing, perhaps including some principles and examples of good practice

19. Members:

- Noted a presentation on involving/supporting students and new graduates more effectively by Dr Ryan, Associate Professor Zhang, Ms Tsiopelas, Dr Ge and Ms Holland
- Agreed that it is the profession's responsibility to ensure that those entering the profession grow into effective, experienced practitioners, as this is critical to the future success of the profession
- Agreed that this can be done via good undergraduate preparation, mentoring, and explicit training programs for new graduates and alumni associations, and
- Would like to see more collaborative effort among the associations towards this important goal

Industry update

20. Members noted a presentation on the prospect of a code of conduct for suppliers by Dr Ma.

Meeting review

21. The Board sought suggestions about how to gain the most benefit from the Reference Group. Discussion covered improving stakeholders' access to members of the Group, perhaps by using a contact or feedback link on the Board website.

Professor Charlie C Xue

Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

August 2018