

Briefing Paper
Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council

20 September 2013

Agenda Item No.: 3.2

**Progress on implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement
and strategic national health issues**

Led by: NSW for the Hospitals Principal Committee (HPC)

Overall Strategy:

Support the recommendations, noting that the Department has not engaged with the incoming Government on these issues.

Key risks:

States and territories may use the election of the new Government to seek to change some elements of health reform.

Talking points:

- Nil

Background:

The National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) outlines the shared objectives and agreed roles and responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the states and territories. The Government has indicated broad support for the NHRA. This paper outlines a proposed framework to illustrate health reform achievements to date and to address strategic national health issues identified at the June 2013 SCoH meeting.

At its teleconference on 12 July 2013, AHMAC agreed that NSW would report back on progress on implementation of the NHRA and seek endorsement of a proposed framework and timeline to address the identified major national strategic health issues.

At its meeting on 1 August 2013, the HPC discussed opportunities to build on health reform achievements to date, and noted a summary of progress to date on implementation of the NHRA.

The proposed framework and opportunities for further work will provide the Commonwealth with the scope to address a wide range of issues. This will present opportunities and challenges for the HPC, and other principal committees, as an attempt is made to form proposed aspirations into practical projects. The proposed framework to address major national health reform areas will focus on the patient and community, and it is suggested that this emphasis be continued in future work. It would also be useful to consider the recommendations of the Expert Panel with regards to engaging in a whole-of-hospital clinical design.

The status update (at [Attachment 1](#) of the agenda paper) focuses on establishment of national authorities and structures. The paper notes that as part of the review process, the effectiveness of the new national bodies in progressing reform and their impact on state health systems will be assessed. As part of this work, it would be useful to include some more information and analysis on how the states and territories have performed, and the impact (to date and projected into the future) of the health reform process on states and territories. The incoming government's position regarding the portfolio agencies will also need to be taken into account in the review process.

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Date: 16 September 2013

Briefing Paper
Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
Teleconference

11 October 2013

Agenda Item No.: 3.2

Progress on implementation of National Health Reform Agreement and strategic national health issues

Led by: NSW for HPC

Overall Strategy:

Support Option 2 as the preferred approach.

Key risks:

States and territories may use this process to seek to change some elements of health reform.

We do not currently have a clear indication of the Government's inclination to support further health reform.

Talking points:

- **The Commonwealth supports Option 2 as the preferred option.**
- **It is unclear what material would be provided to SCoH in November.**
- **We consider it would be better to defer the planned update to SCoH until 2014. This will allow the Hospitals Principal Committee to finalise its workplan and timeframe.**

Background:

The former Health Minister presented an item at the 14 June 2013 SCoH meeting providing an update on the progress of implementation of national health reforms (including the National Health Reform Agreement) and proposing that AHMAC explore possible future directions for further reform of Australia's health system. SCoH agreed at this meeting that AHMAC would "Provide a report to SCoH on Progress on implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement and strategic national health issues" by November 2013.

AHMAC subsequently agreed that NSW, through the Hospitals Principal Committee (HPC), would develop a work plan and timeline in consultation with other relevant Principals Committees, to progress this work.

To date, NSW has not provided any detail on the likely content or structure of HPC's work plan or the timeframe it would cover.

The Government has indicated it will undertake a broader review of federal relations which may impact future directions. Deferral will allow more time to ensure the proposed work aligns with the Commonwealth Government health priorities.

Progress on implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement

The Commonwealth, in conjunction with the states and territories, has successfully implemented all the key elements of the Agreement.

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**Briefing Paper
Standing Council on Health**

8 November 2013

Agenda Item No.: 2.1

Progressing implementation of national health reform and strategic national health issues

Meeting outcome sought

That Ministers note the progress report prepared by NSW on *Progressing implementation of national health reform and strategic national health issues*.

Sponsoring Jurisdiction: NSW for the Hospitals Principal Committee (HPC)

Commonwealth Overall Strategy

Provide an outline of the Government's priorities in health.

Note that the National Commission of Audit is likely to have implications for Commonwealth funding priorities for health.

Key Risks

This project may initiate reform proposals from the states and territories that the Commonwealth does not support.

Talking Points

- **The Abbott Government's priorities in relation to health were signalled in the Coalition's Policy to Support Australia's Health System.**
- **We believe that:**
 - **strong public hospitals providing universal access to care must be a central pillar of our health system;**
 - **the transition to a more transparent funding model for public hospitals through activity based funding is appropriate;**
 - **public hospitals must be responsive to local needs, with strong local community and clinician engagement; and**
 - **to alleviate pressure on public hospitals, Australia needs strong primary care that is readily accessible.**
- **The Government is committed to rebuilding primary care. In addition to a very significant additional investment in expanding teaching and training opportunities in general practice, we have announced a review of the Medicare Locals structure to ensure that funding is being spent as effectively as possible to support frontline services rather than administration.**
- **Alongside this review, we are also keen to work with states and territories to explore ways of achieving stronger, more sustainable coordination and integration of local health services across a range of different settings – including hospital and community-based treatment and care.**

- **A real question in my mind is whether we are collectively achieving the objectives originally set out for Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals. Are they facilitating the local connections between health services that we know are needed for our health system to be sustainable and affordable well into the future?**
- **If we can get these links working well at the local level, we will not only achieve better outcomes for patients, but also make real progress on eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort – which will reduce waste and improve the overall efficiency of our health system.**
- **The terms of reference of the National Commission of Audit also point us in this direction. As you would be aware, the Commission is due to report on the first phase of its work by the end of January 2014 – and I expect that its work will have implications for Commonwealth funding priorities for health going forward.**
- **I look forward to continuing to discuss these important issues with you over coming months.**
- **With respect to one of the strategic national health issues referred to in this paper, I have recently announced a review of the Personal Controlled Electronic Health Record, to report to me before the end of December 2013.**

Background

On 14 June 2013, SCoH considered the progress of implementation of national health reforms (including the National Health Reform Agreement). SCoH agreed at this meeting that the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) would "*Provide a report to SCoH on Progress on implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement and strategic national health issues*" by November 2013.

The 'strategic national health issues' identified by Ministers were:

- eHealth;
- local integration of Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals;
- better integration of acute and primary health care;
- better coordination of care for people with chronic and complex conditions; and
- cancer care.

AHMAC subsequently agreed that NSW, through the HPC, would develop a work plan and timeline to progress this work. NSW has now prepared a workplan identifying key issues to be further investigated and a timeframe for further work to be undertaken. At this stage the issues identified have not been worked into reform proposals. It is expected that AHMAC will report back to SCoH in May 2014.

Progress on implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement ('the Agreement')

The Commonwealth, in conjunction with the states and territories, has successfully implemented all the key elements of the Agreement.

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