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COAG REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME (NRAS) A SQUANDERED OPPORTUNITY

The AMA has lodged its submission to the COAG Health Council on the *Regulation of Australia’s health professions: Keeping the National Law up to date and fit for purpose.*

The COAG Health Council is considering potential reforms to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law), which provides the legislative base for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) for doctors.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the AMA is deeply disappointed that the COAG Health Council has squandered the opportunity to really evaluate the effectiveness of the National Law.

“The consultation document provided to stakeholders does not allow proper analysis of the effectiveness of the scheme,” Dr Bartone said.

“In the absence of data or any analysis, the consultation paper simply offers a grab-bag of poorly thought-out ideas and thoughts. It lacks intellectual rigour.”

Dr Bartone said that health practitioners need to be able to operate in a system that provides clarity and which supports the health and wellbeing of patients and practitioners alike.

“The counter-productive impacts of the existing mandatory reporting legislation are front of mind for the medical profession,” Dr Bartone said.

“We have seen with mandatory reporting how getting the system wrong prevents health practitioners accessing the medical care and treatment they need in a timely way.

“We need to ensure that we do not make similar mistakes with the National Law scheme.”

The AMA always supports the safety and wellbeing of patients. But there are reforms proposed in this document that will increase the uncertainty for everybody – doctors and patients.

“To that end, we have called for the scrapping of the concept of a non-medical Chair of the Medical Board of Australia yet again – this position is simply too important and challenging to have someone who does not understand medical practice,” Dr Bartone said.

“We support improving the notification and assessment process, as this will increase transparency for doctors and patients.

“The system is crying out for change, so we agree with any proposals in this document that could make the current system more efficient and workable, and reduce the negative burden on our hard-working doctors and other health professionals.

“We welcome Health Ministers backing the AMA position to allow for a right of appeal for a caution. A caution can have a significant detrimental effect on a doctor’s career, and it is time this was formally recognised.”

The AMA submission is at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-second-stage-reforms-national-registration-and-accreditation-scheme>

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