

# FORUM OF AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCILS

2 March 2009

The Hon Nicola Roxon MP  
Minister for Health and Ageing  
MG 50  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of the Forum of Australian Health Professions Councils\* representing the ten health professions subject to the forthcoming introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. We understand from press reports that the Meeting of Australian Ministers of Health in the second week of March may consider changes to the IGA governing the scheme.

There are two issues raised in the press reports concerning accreditation matters where the Forum believes a beneficial outcome can be achieved.

The first is to assure the independence of accreditation agencies by not requiring the national professional registration boards to seek Ministerial Council approval of professional accreditation standards and processes as in the current COAG model.

The second is to extend the mandate of the existing accreditation agencies from three years to a full accreditation cycle (in most professions between 5-7 years).

Section 13 of the IGA provides a simple process to amend the Agreement. Any participating Government may propose amendments and if the Ministerial Council agrees, they are adopted. If the changes proposed here are agreed by the Ministerial Council in March 2009 they could be incorporated into a modified Bill B and still meet the 2010 deadline.

All members of the Forum remain committed to the introduction of a national scheme of registration and accreditation for health professionals by 2010.

Yours sincerely,

Gina Geffen, AM  
Deputy Chairperson

Joan McMeeken  
Chairperson

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Australian Dental Council  
Australian Medical Council  
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council  
Australian Pharmacy Council  
Australian Physiotherapy Council  
Australian Psychology Accreditation Council  
Australasian Osteopathic Council  
Australasian Podiatry Council  
Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia  
Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand

