

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION AGENCY – 2023–24 BUDGET ESTIMATES - INDEX OF QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – 1 JUNE 2023

QoN no.	Department/Agency	Senator	Subject	Question	Hansard page/Written	Heating date/Date received
Ahpra-040	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Anne Ruston	Accreditation (training) standards for cosmetic surgery endorsement - timeframes	<p>Senator RUSTON: Can I take you to that point then? In terms of the new endorsement in cosmetic surgery standards, are they written in the same format as the standards for other forms of surgery?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: Perhaps I could complete my answer and explain how the standards work. As I say, there are requirements both for educational providers and for the programs of study offered. The provider standards focus on capability and appropriateness to deliver medical education and training and, because of the unique nature of cosmetic surgery, they include additional requirements over and above what the Australian Medical Council might require of specialist medical colleges in areas like governance, academic decision-making, resourcing to support education and training. The standards for the programs of study are very comparable to the standards for specialist training programs that are accredited by the AMC, but the AMC have made some changes which really relate to some wider modernisation, if you like, that they're doing of their standards. They are written in a slightly different way. There has been some joining of some of the standards that, in a wider context, might currently be expressed separately. But, as I say, that reflects a wider modernisation piece that the AMC are doing in relation to standards.</p> <p>Senator RUSTON: Are they able to be compared? I</p>	45-46	1/06/2023

				<p>understand that there is a move towards a modernisation of standards, or the format of the standards. I suppose that's probably a better way of describing it.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: That's correct.</p> <p>Senator RUSTON: But what we've got here is that the existing standards for all specialist surgery are written in a format. It is anticipated that that format is to be modernised in due course. When is that likely to occur?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: That will be a progressive program of work that the AMC do over years as they seek to progress their standards and also progress their program of accreditation against those standards.</p> <p>Senator RUSTON: So you're talking about years.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: I'd probably have to take on notice the exact time frame, but I could certainly provide that for you.</p> <p>Senator RUSTON: It's not going to be tomorrow.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: No, it's not going to be tomorrow.</p>		
Ahpra-041	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Larissa Waters	Data - number of sexual misconduct matters	<p>Senator WATERS: Great. Thank you. When we last spoke in February, you had 933 sexual misconduct complaints that you were investigating. What is that number at the moment?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: We'd probably need to take that on notice because we don't yet have a full year. We're still seeing an upward trend but probably less than we saw last year.</p>	49	1/06/2023
Ahpra-042	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Larissa Waters	Timeframes - average time for completing investigations (sexual misconduct matters)	<p>Senator WATERS: What's the average time frame for completing an investigation?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: That varies hugely, and sometimes it's out of our control. For example, if the police are involved, we would often wait—we might decide what we need to do around any immediate regulatory action to keep the public safe, but then we would step back until the police had completed their inquiries or, if there were charges laid and it was going to court, until that process ended. There can</p>	50	1/06/2023

				<p>be quite a huge range in terms of the time frame. If we're going to tribunal, which is where we go with the serious matters, those tribunal time frames are also out of our control.</p> <p>Senator WATERS: Can you, nonetheless, take on notice the average time frame for completing an investigation if the police are involved, if the tribunal is the ultimate destination, and if neither of those things are happening, as a yardstick for us?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: For these sexual misconduct matters, yes.</p>		
Ahpra-043	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Larissa Waters	Timeframes - notifications average time	<p>Senator WATERS: Mr Fletcher, could you tell me what the current average time for resolution of a complaint is. Perhaps if, as we talked about last time, you could segment that into serious or less serious or ones that are merely a referral to the relevant state body.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: I will perhaps take that on notice.</p>	58	1/06/2023
Ahpra-044	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Larissa Waters	Resources - staff with focus on sexual misconduct matters	<p>Senator WATERS: Have you allocated any additional resources to address the backlog of complaints? Because 933 at one time is an awful lot, and that has trended upward even more since then.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: Yes, we have. I'm going to give you a figure that is actually for our investigations team as a whole. Over the past year, we've taken a number of steps, including increasing staff. In what we call our notifications area, which deals with all these matters, we've increased staff by nine per cent over the past year, which is an additional 31 staff in that area. That's wider than just sexual misconduct, but it's the area that deals with any of these concerns about registered health practitioners.</p> <p>Senator WATERS: How many of those 31 would focus on sexual misconduct.</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: I'd have to take that on notice and come back to you.</p>	50	1/06/2023

Ahpra-045	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Larissa Waters	Increasing community members on decision-making boards in national scheme - plan and timing	<p>Senator WATERS: You mentioned at the outset that you are seeking to increase community members on your decision-making committees; can you give me a little more detail about how that's being implemented?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: Certainly. All of our decision-making committees currently have community members on them as well as practitioner members. In fact, in the area of medicine, the chair of the committee that deals with any of these allegations about boundary violations or sexual misconduct is a community member. For a couple of professions, like nursing, midwifery and medicine, we have state and territory boards which are appointed by health ministers in each state and territory, and they have community members on them as well. We're working with each of those ministers and their health departments to look at increasing community membership on those state and territory boards. We're also working with each of the 15 national boards that appoint these regulatory committees on a plan to increase community membership of those committees. We have to factor in current appointments and time frames of appointments and the like, so it's a process that's happening over time, but it's very much our focus in terms of the membership of those state and territory boards and those delegated committees.</p> <p>Senator WATERS: Noting that you're still looking at a plan to do the thing, what sort of time frame do you envisage would be required for you to increase the community members on those 15 national boards?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: We have already taken steps, but I'm happy to take on notice what the overall plan and time frame is for that.</p>	50	1/06/2023
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Ahpra-046	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Malcolm Roberts	Data - number of doctors whose registration cancelled or suspended due to views on ivermectin	<p>Senator ROBERTS: How many health practitioners have either been suspended or had their registration cancelled because they made statements that supported the use of ivermectin in the context of treatment of COVID-19?</p> <p>Dr Orchard: We'd have to take that on notice and have a look.</p>	53	1/06/2023
Ahpra-047	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Anne Ruston	Data - notifications and professional misconduct	<p>Senator RUSTON: How many claims of professional misconduct do you usually get in a year?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: I'll just go to the last financial year. We received about 10,000 complaints.</p> <p>Senator RUSTON: How many of those would you uphold? Under your processes, how many would have been found to have been sufficient for you to take action in relation to that misconduct?</p> <p>Mr Fletcher: The point to make also is that we get complaints about conduct, performance and health. In fact, the majority are about performance rather than conduct, and then we get a small number about health or impairment. It's under one per cent that end up in a tribunal; around one per cent which is at the most serious end, because that's where we have our professional misconduct. I'd probably need to give you the exact figure on notice, but the vast majority of those do not result in a need for regulatory action. I think it's important to say that it's not necessarily because there wasn't a basis for the concern, it's often because the practitioner has recognised the issue, or their employer has recognised it, and taken steps to address the concern. Therefore, there isn't, if you like, a gap in terms of risk to the public which requires regulatory action.</p>	61	1/06/2023

				<p>Senator RUSTON: Is it possible to get some sort of understanding around that? It would be interesting to get a breakdown of the particular categories of complaint: obviously, those which resulted in necessary action on your behalf; those that took action proactively to resolve the issue themselves to your satisfaction; and those where there was really no need for them to have been referred, because you have found the referral to be unwarranted.</p>		
Ahpra-048	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Ministerial briefings	<p>1. Since 1 July 2022, has the Department/Agency been provided with advice or a direction on a minimum turnaround time for consideration of briefs by the Minister? If so, when was this advice provided to the Department? Please provide the minimum turnaround requirement. If there has been a change in a previously set minimum turnaround requirement, please provide: a) the previous turnaround requirement; and b) the date the change was requested.</p> <p>31. Since 1 July 2022, has the department / agency ever received a request from a portfolio minister's office seeking data or information separated out by electorate? a. Please provide a list of all requests, including any timeframe provided for a response, whether a response was provided, and the context of the request if provided. b. Please provide a copy of all responses to the request.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-049	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Hospitality	<p>2. Since 1 July, has the Department provided any hospitality in Ministers' offices? Please specify the date, itemised cost, purpose, and attendees for the hospitality.</p> <p>Since 1 July 2022, have there been any amendments to the Department's policy on providing hospitality in the Ministers offices?</p>	Written	1/06/2023

				If so, please provide a copy of the policy and a reference for the amendment.		
Ahpra-050	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Departmental liaison officers	<p>3. How many Departmental Liaison Officers have been allocated to each Minister in the portfolio? Please provide a list that outlines the level of the member of the department, the Minister they have been allocated to, and the time they have been allocated to the Minister. Please denote any change in this allocation since February 2023.</p> <p>4. How many staff have been provided to Ministers offices not in a capacity as a Departmental Liaison Officer? Please provide a list that outlines the level of the member of the department, the Minister they have been allocated to, and the time they have been allocated to the Minister. Please denote any change in this allocation since February 2023.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-051	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Meetings and briefings with the Minister/s	<p>5. How many meetings has the Secretary/agency head had with the Ministers in their portfolio since 1 July 2022? Please provide a list with the number of meetings by Minister, and the date of the first meeting with each Minister.</p> <p>6. How many meetings has the Secretary/agency head had with any Ministers not in their portfolio since 1 July 2022? Please provide a list with the number of meetings by Minister, and the date of the first meeting with each Minister.</p> <p>7. How many briefs has the Department/agency provided to each Minister in its portfolio? Please provide a list with the number of briefs by Minister, and the date of the first provided brief.</p>	Written	1/06/2023

Ahpra-052	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	New Policy Proposals	<p>8. How many New Policy Proposals has the Department/agency provided to each Minister in its portfolio since 1 July 2022? Please provide a list with the number of New Policy Proposals by Minister, and the date of the first provided New Policy Proposal. Please denote where these New Policy Proposals have been provided since February 2023.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-053	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Use of office paper	<p>9. Please provide the amount of paper the Department/agency sources from Australian producers and from overseas. Please provide the amount in dollar value on a financial year basis for the last five financial years.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-054	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Membership on committees and taskforces	<p>10. Please provide a list of all the Commonwealth inter-departmental committees of which the Department/agency has membership. Please specify where there are changes to the list since February 2023.</p> <p>11. Please provide a list of all the Commonwealth taskforces of which the Department/agency has membership. Please specify where there are changes to the list since February 2023.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-055	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	2022-23 October Budget measure, Savings from External Labour, and Savings from Advertising,	<p>12. In relation to the measure in the 2022-23 October Budget, Savings from External Labour, and Savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses. a. What was the value of savings that the Department/agency was requested to deliver for the 2022-23 year in aggregate? b. Has the Department/agency identified the savings they will make across the following areas to achieve this cut: i. External labour hire</p>	Written	1/06/2023

			Travel and Legal Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Consultancy iii. Advertising campaigns iv. Travel v. Legal expenses <p>c. Can the Department/agency provide a breakdown of the funding reductions they have made in totality, and in each of the above areas, and what they relate to?</p> <p>d. Has the Department/agency been informed of the cut that will be made to their funding in the next financial year, or the rest of the forward estimates?</p> <p>e. Can the Department/agency confirm the total new number of contracts (ongoing and terminating) and total cost of these contracts issued on AusTender since 30 June 2022 which relate to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. External labour hire ii. Consultancy iii. Advertising campaigns iv. Travel v. Legal expenses <p>f. Please provide a breakdown of the value of contracts across each area, and identify the categories on AusTender which are used to determine the Departments identification of the contracts.</p> <p>g. Is the Department/agency on track to meet the saving target?</p> <p>h. Has the Department/agency sought an exemption or alternation from/to the savings target?</p> <p>i. If so, why and was it approved?</p>		
Ahpra-056	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Functions and official receptions	<p>13. In relation to expenditure on any functions or official receptions etc hosted by the Department or agencies in the portfolio in financial year 2022/23 to date, please provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. List of functions; 	Written	1/06/2023

				<p>b. List of attendees; c. Function venue; d. Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive); e. Details of any food served; f. Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and g. Details of any entertainment provided.</p> <p>14. In relation to any functions or official receptions hosted by Ministers or Assistant Ministers in the portfolio in financial year 2022/23 to date, please provide the following: a. List of functions; b. List of attendees; c. Function venue; d. Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive); e. Details of any food served; f. Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and g. Details of any entertainment provided.</p>		
Ahpra-057	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Facility upgrades	<p>15. Were the furniture, fixtures or fittings of the Secretary's/agency head's office, or the offices of any Deputy Secretaries/executive leadership team members, upgraded in financial year 2022/23 to date? Please provide an itemised list of costs (GST inclusive).</p> <p>18. Were the facilities of any of the Departments/agency premises upgraded in financial year 2022/23 to date, for example, staff room refurbishments, kitchen refurbishments, bathroom refurbishments, the purchase of any new fridges, coffee machines, or other kitchen equipment? Please provide a detailed description of the relevant</p>	Written	1/06/2023

				facilities upgraded together with an itemised list of costs (GST inclusive). Please provide any photographs of the upgraded facilities.		
Ahpra-058	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Travel	16. Please provide an itemised list of the Secretary's/agency head's travel for financial year 2022/23 to date, including costs of flights and accommodation. 17. Please provide an itemised list of each Deputy Secretary's/agency head's travel for financial year 2022/23 to date, including costs of flights and accommodation. 19. What was the total cost of staff travel for departmental/agency employees in financial year 2022/23 to date?	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-059	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Media monitoring	20. What was the Department's/agency's total expenditure on media monitoring services in financial year 2022/23 to date?	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-060	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Advertising expenditure / market research	21. What was the Department's/agency's total expenditure on advertising and information campaigns in financial year 2022/23 to date? Please provide an itemised list of the campaigns, their purpose, and their expected costs. 33. Has the department/agency provided any Minister's office with market research conducted in relation to a Commonwealth Information and Advertising Campaign? Please provide a list of the Ministers and the date on which they were provided the research.	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-061	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Promotional merchandise expenditure	22. What was the Department's/agency's total expenditure on promotional merchandise in financial year 2022/23 to date? Please provide an itemised list of the merchandise purchased with costs. Please provide examples of the merchandise purchased.	Written	1/06/2023

Ahpra-062	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Credit cards	<p>23. In relation to departmental use of credit cards:</p> <p>a. How many credit cards are currently on issue for department or agency staff?</p> <p>b. What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card in financial year 2022/23 to date and what was it for?</p> <p>c. How much interest was paid on amounts outstanding from credit cards in financial year 2022/23 to date?</p> <p>d. How much was paid in late fees on amounts outstanding from credit cards in financial year 2022/23 to date?</p> <p>e. What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period in financial year 2022/23 to date?</p> <p>f. How many credit cards were reported as lost or stolen in financial year 2022/23 to date and what was the cost of their replacement?</p> <p>g. How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to department or agency policy in financial year 2022/23 to date? What was the total value of those purchases? How many purchases were asked to be repaid on that basis in financial year 2022/23 to date and what was the total value thereof? Were all those amounts actually repaid? If no, how many were not repaid, and what was the total value thereof?</p> <p>h. What was the largest purchase that was deemed illegitimate or contrary to department or agency policy and asked to be repaid in financial year 2022/23 to date? What that amount actually repaid, in full? If no, what amount was left unpaid?</p> <p>i. Are any credit cards currently on issue connected to rewards schemes? Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?</p> <p>j. Please provide a copy of the department or agency's staff</p>	Written	1/06/2023
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				credit card policy. k. Please denote any changes to this policy that have been made since February 2023		
Ahpra-063	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Workers' compensation (Comcare)	24. In relation to department/agency: a. In the current financial year to date, how many matters have been referred to Comcare? b. Of those claims referred to Comcare, redacting confidential information, advise in which division the claimant works or worked and the circumstances surrounding the claim. c. What has the Department/agency learned from past Comcare claims? d. Of those employees who submitted a Comcare claim, how many returned to work after a period of absence?	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-064	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Matters referred to the Fair Work Commission	25. In relation to the department/agency: a. In the current financial year to date, how many matters have been referred to the Fair Work Commission? b. Of those matters referred to either, please provide a comprehensive account of the circumstances, redacting confidential information, including in which division the employee is or was employed, the nature of the complaint and the nature of the determination of the Fair Work Commission, Fair Work Ombudsman and/or conciliator.	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-065	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Reviews agency is / has undertaken	26. Please provide a list of the number of reviews that the department/agency is currently conducting. Please provide: a. the name of the review; b. the purpose of the review; c. the name or names of the reviewer(s); d. the remuneration for each of the reviewer(s); e. the budgeted cost of the review; f. the amount spent to date; and g. the date the review is due to be completed.	Written	1/06/2023

				<p>27. Please provide a list of the number of reviews that the department/agency has completed since 1 July 2022. Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the name of the review; b. the purpose of the review; c. the name or names of the reviewer(s); d. the remuneration for each of the reviewer(s); e. the budgeted cost of the review; f. the amount spent; g. the date the review was due to be completed; h. the date the review was completed; i. the date the review was provided to the Department; j. the date the review was provided to the Minister; and k. the date the review was provided to the Minister's office. 		
Ahpra-066	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Committees and advisory boards	<p>28. Please provide a list of the interdepartmental committees that the department/agency participates in or provides representation to. Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the name of the interdepartmental committee; b. a list of the membership; c. the date it was established; and d. its purpose. <p>29. How many new entities (including advisory boards and agencies) have been created within the portfolio since May 2022? Please list each entity, its purpose, and the date it was created.</p> <p>30. How many new entities (including advisory boards and agencies) have been wound up, amalgamated, ceased or disbanded since May 2022?</p>	Written	1/06/2023

				Please list each entity, its purpose, and the date it was wound up, amalgamated, ceased, or disbanded.		
Ahpra-067	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Freedom of Information requests	<p>34. How many freedom of information applications has the department/agency received since 1 July 2022? Please provide a breakdown of the number including;</p> <p>a. the number of applications withdrawn; b. the number of applications refused under section 34 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982; c. the number of applications refused under section 24 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982; d. the number of applications refused under section 24A of the Freedom of Information Act 1982; e. the number of applications subject to internal review; f. the number of applications subject to review by the OAIC; g. the number of applications subject to review by the AAT; h. the number of applications subject to review by the Federal Court; and i. the number of applications where the original decision has been overturned.</p> <p>35. How many freedom of information applications have been received by the Minister's office since 1 July 2022? Please provide a breakdown including;</p> <p>a. the number of applications by Minister, b. the number of applications that are yet to be decided; c. the number of applications refused; and d. the number of applications overdue, including the number of days overdue.</p>	Written	1/06/2023
Ahpra-068	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	Government business enterprise	<p>To be asked of any government business enterprise</p> <p>1. How many FTE are employed within the GBE within roles relating to government relations and/or government affairs?</p>	Written	1/06/2023

				<p>2. Please provide the total remuneration for the following individuals, including any short-term incentives and a list of any fringe benefits with their estimated value:</p> <p>a. CEO b. Chair of the Board c. Each member of the executive</p> <p>3. For each member of the board, please provide:</p> <p>a. Date they were first appointed to the board b. Date their term is due to conclude c. How many terms they have had on the board</p> <p>4. For the Chair of the board, please provide:</p> <p>a. Date they were first appointed to the board b. Date they were first appointed Chair c. Date their term as Chair is due to conclude d. How many terms they have had on the board e. How many terms they have had as Chair of the board</p> <p>5. Is the GBE a member of any industry bodies? Please list them along with details of any cost or membership fees associated with each body.</p>		
Ahpra-069	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Jane Hume	ASL	<p>32. Please provide the number of current ASL allocated to the department/agency as at 1 May 2023. Please provide:</p> <p>a. a breakdown of this ASL by APS classification; b. the number of ASL, by classification, allocated to each outcome for which the department/agency is responsible; and c. the number of ASL, by classification, that are currently not filled.</p>	Written	1/06/2023