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AMA submission – Senate inquiry into the establishment of a national registration system for Australian paramedics

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The AMA supports the principle of national registration of paramedics under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), on the basis that this would ensure that all paramedics are educated and trained to a single, national standard, and that their practice is underpinned by national registration standards.

The AMA does not generally support new practitioner groups joining the NRAS unless the practice has a scientific basis and there are potentially significant safety risks for patients.

However, paramedics' practice meets these criteria.

There is a good case on the grounds of patient safety given that paramedics working in state health services can independently administer scheduled medicines and perform clinical interventions under state legislation, guidelines and protocols.

The AMA notes that the new *National Code of Conduct for Health Workers* (National Code) and its supporting code-regulation regime, including mutual recognition of prohibition orders across Australia, will assist in protecting patients from incompetent and/or unethical health workers who fall outside NRAS.

Health Ministers agreed in April 2015 to adopt the National Code which sets national standards of conduct and practice for all health care workers, against which disciplinary action can be taken such as the issuing of a prohibition order. It applies to many occupations such as dietitians, naturopaths, speech pathologists, counsellors, anaesthetic assistants – and paramedics.

The Code will allow state governments to effectively and consistently deal with health care workers that are incompetent or engage in exploitative, predatory or illegal conduct.

However, registration under NRAS provides a framework for national standards to apply to the qualifications and practice of a health profession. Paramedics' registration under NRAS will result in the development of national accreditation standards for the education and training of paramedics, the national accreditation of programs of study, and national standards for the practice of paramedics.

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Australian Medical Association
