



April 2009

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY
INTO THE
NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME
FOR DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH WORKERS**

Whilst the Osteopaths' Registration Board of Western Australia (the Board) endorses the submission prepared by the Australian Osteopathic Registration Boards (AORB), it presents an independent submission to the Senate Inquiry to address particular areas of concern relating to regulation and accreditation.

Regulation

The primary objective of the State-based legislation is to protect the public, and this objective should be maintained, regardless of whether the registration schemes were State-based or managed on a national basis.

Adequate protection of the public should be the primary focus of any regulatory system. The proposed national registration scheme is deficient in this regard when compared to the existing legislation in Western Australia, particularly with respect to the issue of unregistered persons practising osteopathy while using a title other than "osteopath".

Conflicts between manpower requirements and the maintenance of standards of practice frequently lead to a reduction in the protection of the public, and safeguards need to be incorporated into the national registration scheme model to ensure such conflicts do not occur.

Accreditation

The Australian Osteopaths Council (AOC) has recently been established to undertake the role of examining overseas trained osteopaths and accrediting Australian osteopathic courses for registration purposes.

The Board is confident the AOC is well placed to fulfil these roles on behalf of all Australian osteopathy registration boards and believes the AOC should remain an independent body. The Board holds the view that accreditation functions are more appropriately undertaken by a properly constituted council, rather than a government agency.