

Fact sheet

About the Council



Council of New South Wales

Summary

This fact sheet provides information about the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Council of New South Wales. It covers:

- the role of the Council, how we are funded and who we are
- how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are regulated in New South Wales (NSW), and
- how we define a complaint and the types of complaints we manage.

① What is the Council?

The Council is a statutory body that was established in July 2012 under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*. It is part of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The Council consists of three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and a legal member, all of whom are nominated by the Minister for Health and appointed by the Governor of NSW.

What we do

We aim to protect the health and safety of the public by:

- managing complaints about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and students
- promoting compliance with professional standards and the National Board's guidelines.

This may include restricting the practice of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

How we do this

We focus on promoting safe professional practise, protecting public safety and minimising risk. We assess the likelihood of harm to public safety and act to prevent unsafe practise and to minimise harm.

⚙ How does the regulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners work in NSW?

In regulating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners we work with:

- the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC). We consult with the HCCC about complaints relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and students working or studying in NSW. The HCCC can independently investigate serious complaints involving unsatisfactory professional conduct, which can be prosecuted before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
- the Health Professional Councils Authority, an administrative agency of the Ministry of Health, which provides administrative support to all health professional councils in NSW.
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner Board of Australia, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), which manages the registration process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. We collaborate with the Board in relation to professional standards.

Further details about complaints

📄 What is a complaint?

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A complaint is any concern made in writing about a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner in NSW, which relates to their professional performance, conduct and/or health. It also relates to any concerns about the criminal conduct or health of a student. We use the term 'complaint' to refer to:

1. Mandatory notifications

All registered health practitioners, employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and educational institutions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice students, must inform the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia / AHPRA about notifiable conduct.

The *National Law (NSW)* describes 'notifiable conduct' as:

- practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
- sexual misconduct in the practise of the profession
- placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment (health issue), or
- placing the public at risk because of a significant departure from accepted professional standards.

Who manages a complaint?

We can manage:

Performance matters, such as:

- inadequate or inappropriate treatment
- communication issues
- infection control breaches
- inadequate or inaccurate patient records.

Conduct matters, such as:

- inappropriate behaviour
- inappropriate administration of medications
- non compliance with a condition or undertaking
- a criminal conviction or a criminal finding for an offence
- providing unnecessary health services.

Health matters, such as:

- physical / mental health
- drug and alcohol matters

that meet the definition of impairment under the *National Law (NSW)*.

2. Complaints

Complaints from any person, including employers, educational institutions or members of the public such as patients or relatives of a patient.

3. Self-notifications

Where an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner informs us or AHPRA about a relevant event or an issue which might impact their practice, such as being hospitalised due to a health impairment.

4. Complaints about students

Complaints in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice students, if they relate to health or criminal conduct matters.

5. National Board audit notifications

Complaints from AHPRA relating to non-compliance with registration requirements.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia manages advertising issues and complaints about a person practising while unregistered or using a title when not qualified to do so.

The HCCC manages complaints referred for investigation as well as complaints about non-registered health practitioners and health service organisations.

Fair Trading NSW manages complaints about fees, claims for compensation and refunds.

We cannot manage complaints:

- if the person is not a registered practitioner or student
- about industrial issues or personal disputes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners which are not about unsafe or inappropriate practise
- a complaint about a practice or service where no specific practitioner is identified.