



Registration of Paramedics in Australia and amending the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010*

Summary Decision Regulatory Impact
Statement for Western Australia

Context

This summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement (DRIS) has been developed to augment a national Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) finalised in 2015. It seeks to highlight in summary form, the implications of options to strengthen regulatory arrangements for paramedics in Western Australia. The national RIS is available on the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council website: <http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Publications/Reports>

The Problem

Following a series of deaths in Western Australia in 2009 a review by the Western Australian Auditor General of the State's ambulance service provider identified deficiencies in clinical safety and quality. Factors that contributed to this were the education and training available, practice standards, and accountability of paramedics.

There is no licencing or registration scheme for paramedics, limited mechanisms to remove poorly performing or impaired practitioners from pr

Consequently there is confusion about who is a paramedic, arising through the variable regulatory arrangements and inconsistencies in training and education. Employers are also

Without a registration system in place, the evidence base to inform the actual incidents of harm, notifications and complaints and practitioner performance relied on employers and jurisdictions to provide data. The absence of a consistent collection mechanism meant the extent of actual and potential harm to the public was challenging to prove. Over the length of the consultation the industry itself took measures to improve various aspects of the profession such as educational requirements and practice standards which strengthened the argument for self-regulation.

The Commonwealth Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) is responsible for assessing all regulatory proposals decided by the Australian Government and by COAG and Ministerial Councils and any consequent RIS. Despite considerable effort including assistance from Victoria, the Western Australian Department of Health was advised in June 2015 by the OBPR that the RIS required further work to meet the requirements in the *COAG Best Practice Regulation Guide for Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies 2007*.

At their meeting on 6 November 2015 the COAG Health Council was fully briefed on the extensive work to date on the RIS and the likely outcome it will not be assessed as meeting the Regulation Guide requirements. The COAG Health Council voted to include paramedics in the NRAS. Members who were in favour, including the Minister for Health in Western Australia, were satisfied that sufficient work had been done to assess the regulatory impact and that Option 4 – registration of paramedics under the NRAS – would provide the greatest net benefit to their jurisdictions and the Australian community.

Specific Benefits to Western Australia from National Registration of Paramedics

Following the COAG Health Council decision, consultation has continued with the peak bodies to achieve the optimal approach to implementation. Current standards for employment as a paramedic in Western Australia through St John Ambulance align with those being proposed nationally, and key stakeholders in Western Australia remain in support of paramedics being included in the NRAS.

Employers of paramedics in Western Australia will benefit from the Scheme's pre-registration integrity checking which includes international and Australian criminal records screening, confirmation of educational currency and professional standing. Students will also have a clear pathway to registration as paramedic and ability to work anywhere in Australia.

Western Australian paramedics will benefit from sophisticated registration systems and a statutory base that ensures practitioners and the State are represented on the national Board. The entities within the Scheme also work actively to create efficiencies and registration renewal fees have been reduced over time for four professions, held stable for five professions and increased marginally or in line with indexation for the remaining seven.

Western Australians will have increased confidence in the provision of paramedic services through access to information about registered paramedics on the public register, registration standards for paramedics, the .4538(h)1.74739(e)12.6869(r)-8.07991aehl478436(p)1.74epn

emergency services personnel. The provision of emergency out of hospital care, endorsement to administer scheduled medicines, and practice standards will become consistent and evolve through the national Board's responsibility to ensure the profession practices safely.

Wider public benefits will include the ability for jurisdictions to plan for a sustainable paramedic workforce through access to the public register database; the ability to best utilise the paramedic profession to meet evolving models of care through setting educational requirements in line with future population health needs; and research into areas of practitioner performance that can predict where and when a practitioner may be at risk and an intervention needed.

The Department of Health, for the reasons stated above, agree that there are no other options available that address the problem and provide the comprehensive net benefits for Western Australia. The decision to include paramedics in the NRAS is timely and coincides with, and will benefit from, recommendations from the 2014 Independent Review of the NRAS being implemented to improve the functions, transparency, accountability and governance of the Scheme.

The findings from the Independent Review also provide further assurance in regard to the decision to register paramedics under the NRAS. In his final report to the COAG Health Council, the Independent Reviewer Mr Kim Snowball made the following statements:

'The National Scheme today oversees the registration and regulation of more than 619,500 health professionals from 14 health professions. Its importance in keeping people safe and ensuring community confidence in the health workforce cannot be understated'.

'There was a strong and consistent acknowledgement across forums and submissions of the achievements of the National Scheme and the major success it has delivered in reforming health regulation in Australia'.

Implementation

practitioners; medical radiation practitioners; and occupational therapists). Widespread communications including media occurred nationally to ensure practitioners lodged their applications and were registered to be able to practise.

Evaluation and Post-implementation Review of the Proposal

In some circumstances, changes to regulatory schemes under the COAG model require a review after two years from implementation. The decision to include paramedics in the NRAS will be subject to this review requirement and Western Australia will participate in that process. In light of the limited performance data available to government at this time, which has restricted the quantification of proposed options considered under the national RIS, a post-implementation review is considered particularly useful. The process to conduct reviews under the COAG regulatory model is typically comprehensive and undertaken by eminent, credible and recognised experts.



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FORMAL ADVICE ON SUMMARY DECISION REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT COMPLIANT

Registration of Paramedics in Australia and Amending the Paramedics Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010

Thank you for providing the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement for the above proposal. The Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit notes that the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement seeks to amend a national Procedural Impact Statement undertaken in 2015 in relation to the proposed amendments to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in Western Australia.

The Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit notes that the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Assessment criteria have been satisfied. However, Regulatory Impact Assessment is required. It should be noted that the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement does not support any particular regulatory option or outcome and does not verify the underlying data or methodology used in a Regulatory Impact Statement.

Once this decision has been made publicly by government in its final form, please ensure that the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement is made publicly available on your website. You should refer to the Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit website for further information.

Please note that the Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit will not be consulted on any changes being made to the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement. Any changes may impact the Summary Decision Regulatory Impact Statement compliance. The reference RG1500 should be quoted in all future correspondence and compliance reporting on this proposal. This letter should be retained as a record of the Regulatory Gatekeeping Unit's advice.

If you have any questions or comments please contact Monika Fursari-Casa on (08) 6551 2723. Alternatively, you can email regulatorygatekeeping@finance.wa.gov.au

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ECONOMIC REFORM

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