



September 2009

Dear naturopathy and/or herbal medicine stakeholder,

Re: Progress toward establishing the Australian Register of Naturopaths & Herbalists

You may be aware that a steering committee was formed several months ago with the aim of establishing the Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH), an independent national Register. This letter is to update you on progress so far and seek input from practitioners and industry stakeholders on the formation of ARONAH and its aims.

What is ARONAH?

ARONAH will be a form of self-regulation that will be independent of all other organizations. A Register is a 'one-stop-shop' where the public and all other interested parties can be assured that practitioners on the Register have met a minimum standard of education that includes professional standards and ethics. The purpose of a Registration Board is primarily the protection of the public, while the purpose of a professional association is primarily to promote the profession. These two roles should be kept separate.

ARONAH will be run by an independent Board and the majority of Board members will be naturopaths and herbalists.

ARONAH cannot be a *statutory* registration board because current national health practitioner *legislation* does not include naturopathy and herbal medicine. However, ARONAH's processes will generally mirror those required of statutory boards such as Chinese medicine and chiropractic. This means ARONAH will follow as closely as possible the processes required of Boards by law, for example, that a majority of Board members must be practitioners, and that processes must be rigorous, transparent and accountable for all activities such as selecting the first Board and handling of complaints.

Why set up an independent national Registration Board?

For many years the professions of naturopathy and herbal medicine have been held back by lack of agreement between associations on minimum education standards, a situation which endangers the public and creates obstacles to recognition by other health care providers, government, and health organizations. A national Registration Board will set minimum educational requirements. Educational requirements will be set by the Board, phased in over a number of years, and will include generous grandparenting arrangements.

Process and Progress

Establishing ARONAH requires three basic steps:

- 1. Steering Committee.** This is a group of people who start the whole process off. Their role will end once the first Board becomes operational.
- 2. Selection Committee.** This group will select the members of the first Board. It will be a small group of esteemed Australians who are objective, free of conflicts of interest, and are experienced in matters of governance and the selection of high calibre candidates.
- 3. The Board.** This group will run the Register. The Board will be constituted according to the rules set out by the Federal Government for Registration Boards. The first Board will be chosen by the Selection Committee from nominations received, and must have a majority of practitioner members (i.e. naturopaths and herbalists). New Board members will be elected on a regular basis.

Timeline and Progress

This table sets out the proposed stages and progress. Further information is provided below the table.

Task	Achieved	Due by
Steering Committee	June 2009	
Website set up	August 2009	
Publicity campaign stage 1	June-July 2009	
Publicity campaign stage 2 including seminars		Oct-Dec 2009
Selection Committee appointed		October 2009
Call for submissions from professions & public		Current: ends 30 Nov 2009
Call for nominations to the Board		1 Nov – 15 December 2009
Selection Committee appoints first Board		January 2010
Board becomes operational		February 2010
Register begins to accept members		July 2010

Call for submissions

Wide consultation with the professions is sought. Practitioners, associations, organizations, industry bodies and members of the public are invited to make a submission to the steering committee on this important initiative which is critical to the future of naturopathy and herbal medicine. What do you think about self-regulation, statutory regulation, the role of the ARONAH Board, future aims of the Board, who should be on the Board, educational and other standards, etc. Submissions can be of any length and will be received until **30 November 2009**. Submissions should be lodged at submissions@aronah.org and will be made publically available on the ARONAH website (see below).

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will have the important task of receiving all applications for Board membership and selecting the first Board. The steering committee is currently seeking eminent Australians who are free of conflicts of interest to sit on the Selection Committee. Your suggestions are welcome.

Call for nominations to the Board

Any person can apply to become a Board member. In accordance with NRAS guidelines the Board must comprise between one half and two thirds practicing naturopaths and herbalists, and must have at least one consumer member. The Board must be representative of practitioner demographics such as gender and location as per National Registration and Accreditation Scheme guidelines. Nominations will be accepted from **1 November 2009 – 15 December 2010**.

ARONAH website – www.aronah.org

Please visit the ARONAH website for further information and to contact us, make an enquiry, or lodge a submission. We seek your support for national registration, a crucial step in the future of naturopathy and herbal medicine. Further details of all stages will be placed on the website as they occur or are required.

Yours faithfully,

ARONAH Steering Committee

www.aronah.org