

2018 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AUSTRALIAN REGISTER OF NATUROPATHS AND HERBALISTS

BACKGROUND

Another busy year for ARONAH has passed. In 2018 the main focus for ARONAH has been to lobby the government around the changes to the Private Health Insurance (PHI) rebates which involve naturopaths. ARONAH board members have also written some academic articles on this issue. ARONAH representatives have been busy meeting with advisors to the Federal health minister, as well as the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC) in Melbourne. ARONAH also continues to advise the two major colleges in Australia on course related matters. And ARONAH is also involved in funding some naturopathic research on clinical and professional uses.

This report overviews the key activities related to these areas.

LOBBYING

Several meetings throughout 2018 have been held with advisors to the Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt regarding the PHI rebates. ARONAH has emphasised the far-ranging implications of the removal of naturopathy from the PHI rebates, one of which is that the ability of a naturopath to obtain PHI is often a way the public can gauge the competency of the naturopath they are seeing. ARONAH wrote a submission to the government regarding the changes to the private health insurance rebates for naturopaths and herbalists as well as some academic papers. These are very useful to take along to meetings with local MP's and ARONAH members are welcome to request copies of these if they require.

ARONAH board members met with some senior advisors at Health Complaints Commissioner in Melbourne in February. ARONAH is very proud to be a representative of the standards held by the naturopathy profession.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In March 2019 ARONAH representatives will be attending the NHAA conference to be held in Melbourne, along with the general assembly of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF), which will be part of the conference. ARONAH is proud to be an associate member of the WNF.

Once again, ARONAH was part of the Course Advisory Committee meetings for THINK education as well as Endeavour College of Natural Health. Endeavour College of Natural Health have adopted ARONAH's standards for all their naturopathic students in their final year clinics. These course advisory meetings take place so that the higher education sector can engage with the external naturopathic community. By ARONAH being involved in these meetings we are standing behind future generations of naturopaths and Western herbalists and ensuring our high standards are being taught and achieved.

NATUROPATHIC RESEARCH

ARONAH is funding part of a research project looking at naturopathy graduates and their experiences as they go into practice. This is the first study of its kind internationally and is essential in recognising the opportunities and challenges of the naturopathic profession. We hope the findings will assist ARONAH (and other

organisations) to best support naturopaths and help them to continue their vital contribution to Australian healthcare.

SUSTAINABILITY

Similarly to 2017, membership growth has been slow in 2018 due to the voluntary nature of ARONAH as an independent register. This slow growth in membership numbers is expected to be an ongoing issue. ARONAH is pursuing other avenues of revenue to ensure sustainability into the future. ARONAH is introducing some new membership categories which are expected to come in to play in 2019.

SOCIAL MEDIA

2018 has been a quieter year on social media. ARONAH had put a strategy in place for regular posts on Facebook and Twitter, in the first half of 2018, and this has seen our following grow to almost 2,500 likes and follows on Facebook. The affiliated group, Naturopaths for Registration also has over 2,000 members and is reasonably active with regular discussions and information shared. Overwhelmingly this has been positive engagement with most posts reaching likes in the double figures, as well as many positive comments.

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