



Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists

## 2019 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AUSTRALIAN REGISTER OF NATUROPATHS AND HERBALISTS

### BACKGROUND

2019 has seen a diverse range of activities undertaken by the ARONAH board. The Private Health Insurance (PHI) rebate removal was the main focus of the first half of the year, which included a meeting at the health department in Canberra in June. The formation of the Australian Naturopathic Council has also been a big focus, with the collaboration of ARONAH alongside the 2 main education institutions as well as the 2 main naturopathic associations in Australia who are all also members of the World Naturopathic Federation. ARONAH has taken steps to ensure our sustainability into the future by creating 2 new membership categories as well as accreditation standards for educational institutions to consider.

This report overviews the key activities related to these areas.

### LOBBYING

The first half of 2019 was spent with further lobbying regarding the removal of the PHI rebates. ARONAH was very pleased with the announcement of the review into this removal. PHI is often a way the public can gauge the competency of the naturopath they are seeing, and ARONAH has been vocal in the implications this and its removal in the absence of statutory registration. ARONAH put together a package of information containing various academic papers, and a copy of the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, which was a special issue devoted to the research on naturopathy and herbal medicine. This was delivered to every state and federal health and shadow health minister in Australia, along with other federal ministers such as Kerryn Phelps, and other supportive ministers. ARONAH believes this package of information was very helpful in obtaining the PHI review. ARONAH members are welcome to request copies of these academic articles if they require. They can be helpful to take along to meetings with your local member of parliament.

At the end of June, ARONAH and NHAA board members met with some senior advisors at the Federal health department in Canberra. There were people from the Private Health Insurance Department as well as AHPRA. This was a very encouraging and positive meeting.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

On the back of the Canberra meetings, The Australian Naturopathic Council (ANC) was formed. The naturopathic profession must present as one united body that represents Australian naturopathic practitioners with relation to lobbying, statutory registration, and policy formation and interpretation. ARONAH has long worked with the NHAA and the formation of the ANC formalises this along with collaboration with other key naturopathic groups. Current members of the NCA are:

1. Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH)
2. Complementary Medicine Association (CMA)
3. Endeavour College of Natural Health (ECNH)
4. Southern School of Natural Therapies (SSNT)
5. Naturopaths and Herbalists Association of Australia (NHAA)

In March 2019 ARONAH board members attended and presented the NHAA conference, which was held in Melbourne, along with the general assembly of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF), which was part of the conference. ARONAH is proud to be an associate member of the WNF and the meeting and conference was very inspiring and worthwhile.



Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists

ARONAH was part of the Course Advisory Committee meetings for THINK education (SSNT/ACNT) as well as Endeavour College of Natural Health. These course advisory meetings take place so that the higher education sector can engage with the external naturopathic community. And ARONAH's participation ensures our high standards are being taught and achieved. Endeavour College of Natural Health have adopted ARONAH's standards for all their naturopathic students in their final year clinics.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

Membership growth has improved 2019 likely due to the PHI rebates seen as a threat to the individual practitioner. ARONAH has introduced some new membership categories. We now have student members which is free, and associate memberships, which is at a reduced fee from full membership. Associate membership is for those who want to support ARONAH's work but for whatever reason cant join as a full member.

As part of ARONAH's commitment to higher education, we endorse Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities to ensure our members have access to high quality, relevant and appropriate CPD that meets their ongoing educational needs at various stages of their careers. This is another income stream for ARONAH.

The ARONAH Board also provides a course accreditation service. The ARONAH board will assess educational programs and the capacity of the educational institution offering the award to do so, according to specified standards. The ARONAH Board considers not only the curriculum and the delivery of education but also the ability of the program to ensure quality outcomes, the resources available and the performance of graduates.

#### COMPLAINTS FROM THE PUBLIC TOWARDS NATUROPATHS AND WESTERN HERBALISTS

Complaints regarding naturopaths and western herbalists are growing as time goes on. ARONAH is a port of call for members of the public to complain about the treatment they have received.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

2019 has been a quieter year on social media. ARONAH has almost 3,000 followers on Facebook (which has grown by about 400 since last year). The affiliated group, Naturopaths for Registration also has over 2,200 members and is reasonably active with regular discussions and information shared. Overwhelmingly this is still mostly positive engagement with most posts reaching likes in the double figures, as well as many positive comments.

Report prepared by  
Jackie Arbuckle  
Chairperson - ARONAH  
Ba Health Sci (naturopathy)  
Grad Dip (psychology)  
Ba App Sci (human biology)