



Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists

2024 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AUSTRALIAN REGISTER OF NATUROPATHS AND HERBALISTS

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

In 2024 we said farewell long standing board member Marion Volk, as well as Dr Joanna Harnett. The ARONAH board would like to acknowledge and thank Marion and Joanna for the time they have served on the board. Marion was involved from the very beginning and was on the board for 13 years. Joanna's time was briefer, but her impact was large. We wish them both well for the future.

One of the main areas of work for ARONAH this year has been the National Education Accreditation Standards, which ARONAH finalised in 2021. These standards are coming up for review in 2025, and so the board has done a lot of preparation for that review.

Entering its 4th year, one of the main focuses of ARONAH's work this year has been the Naturopathic Regulation Research Project (NRRP). This project has been written, reviewed, and is nearing completion.

And as usual, various meetings across the year have been attended by ARONAH board members, including in the World Naturopathic Federation, and for the Private Health Insurance review.

This report overviews the key activities mentioned above, plus more.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Australian Naturopathic Council (ANC)

Background: The establishment of the ANC in 2019 formalises the relationship with the Australian members of the World Naturopathic Federation. ARONAH has continued working closely with the ANC during 2024.

Current members of the ANC are:

1. Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH)
2. Complementary Medicine Association (CMA)
3. Endeavour College of Natural Health (ECNH)
4. Naturopaths and Herbalists Association of Australia (NHAA)
5. Southern Cross University (SCU)
6. Torrens University



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One of the main areas that ARONAH has engaged with the ANC in 2024, is regarding the National Education Accreditation Standards. The standards were written in 2020, and formally released in 2021. These National Standards are reviewed every 5 years as a matter of course. A large meeting was held in May that encompassed all members of the ANC, plus some key stakeholders from NZ. The meeting was very productive and resulted in the beginning of the review of the National Standards. This will continue in 2025.

The Naturopathic Regulation Research Project (NRRP) which began in 2020 is almost complete. It consists of 10 chapters and is a review of the profession of naturopathy in the landscape of Australia. The NRRP will conclude with an application for registration of naturopaths and WHM practitioners under the National Registration Accreditation Scheme. The NRRP has been finalised, reviewed and is almost ready for publication.

World Naturopathic Federation (WNF):

ARONAH is very proud to be non-profit partner of the WNF.

WNF has multiple subcommittees that ARONAH is part of. The two main ones are the Education Subcommittee and the Western Pacific Region meetings. ARONAH board members regularly attend these meetings.

Education sector:

National Education Accreditation Standards:

Background: In 2020 ARONAH conducted the most comprehensive review of education standards of naturopaths in Australia. These standards are due to be reviewed in 2025. The initial steps for this review have begun this year.

Southern Cross University has initial accreditation under the National Education Standards. And South Pacific College of Natural Medicine (SPCNM) in New Zealand, has conditional accreditation.

ARONAH is looking forward to working with all Australian colleges in the future, to ensure they meet the National Education Accreditation Standards for naturopaths.

Course Advisory meetings

Background: Educational course advisory meetings are an essential part of any educational institution's consultation processes with the external naturopathic community. ARONAH's involvement ensures public safety is kept front of mind when any changes to courses are discussed.



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ARONAH was part of the Course Advisory Committee meetings for Torrens University and Southern Cross University in 2024. ARONAH has not been invited to any course advisory meetings at Endeavour since 2021.

LOBBYING AND MEETINGS

The ANC held a face to face meeting after the NHAA Symposium in May which ARONAH attended. We have also attended multiple WNF meetings across the year, as already mentioned.

ARONAH has been part of all stakeholder meetings for the Private Health Insurance review in 2024.

SUBMISSIONS

In October, ARONAH reviewed a Consultation Paper from the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). The submission was called: Review of complexity in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Here ARONAH called for more consideration of naturopaths and WHM practitioners in the National Code of Conduct. We also took the opportunity to draw attention to the issues with the lack of registration for naturopaths and WHM practitioners, which is especially problematic in the absence of the Private Health Insurance rebates.

SUSTAINABILITY

ARONAH membership retention data

After 2 years in a row of membership losses (2022/23) it is pleasing to see ARONAH membership has grown this year with 2 new members, and no losses.

COMPLAINTS FROM THE PUBLIC TOWARDS NATUROPATHS AND WESTERN HERBALISTS

Background: ARONAH is an important port of call for members of the public to complain about the treatment they have received from naturopaths and Western herbalists. Complaints generally centre around unprofessional service, missing major health issues, or reactions to treatment. There has been an additional increase in complaints around the expense of treatments and testing costs in the last 2 years.

In 2024, complaint numbers have returned to a more typical number, albeit slightly higher than average.



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- 2024 calendar year = 8
- 2023 calendar year = 17 (corrected from 16 as one complaint was in late Dec)
- 2022 calendar year = 3
- 2021 calendar year = 5
- 2020 calendar year = 6
- 2019 calendar year = 6
- 2018 calendar year = 9
- 2017 calendar year = 5
- 2016 (second half of the year) = 3

On behalf of the ARONAH board, we thank all our current members and are looking forward to a productive year in 2025.

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