

step up.

Welcome to the Third Edition for 2010 of HCIA's newsletter *Step Up*.

HCIA- ACCREDITATION PROCESS

As indicated in our August newsletter, HCIA is presently considering a process whereby its hearing care practices will be accredited.

- Accreditation will send an important message to the community and to other stakeholders that HCIA is committed to excellence.
- HCIA believes that accreditation is the ultimate formal acknowledgment of a practice's commitment to safe, high quality health care and is an important indicator of benchmark expectations on safe, high quality health care and sound practice operations.
- Accreditation also diminishes the risk that an unacceptable regulatory regime is imposed on the hearing care industry.

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Since early July, HCIA has been undertaking preliminary work to enable it to introduce a process of accreditation. The former Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon Michael Wooldridge, has been engaged in the process as has Dr John Cook, a former senior advisor to The Hon. Simon Crean MP, Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

They are supported by HCIA's **Accreditation Reference Committee** - made up of ten senior hearing care practitioners (both Audiologists and Audiometrists) who regularly report their discussions via the CEO of HCIA, to the HCIA Board. The Accreditation Reference Committee meets on a fortnightly basis.

A **Steering Committee** has also been established - constituted by HCIA Board and Members to inform the process as it becomes more advanced.

A **Consultative Committee** has been established and HCIA has invited representation from various groups including ACAud, HASSA, ASA, Deafness Forum, Australian Hearing and AAAPP. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday October 27th in Sydney.

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As part of the accreditation process, HCIA initially prepared three papers to inform discussion:

1. The accreditation process followed by other professions namely general practitioners, physiotherapists, optometrists, pharmacists and radiologists.
2. How accreditation is implemented by these groups.
3. Overseas experience with hearing care accreditation.

HCIA has also held open consultations in capital cities to inform practitioners about the process and to receive practical feedback. HCIA wishes to thank all of those who gave up their time to attend the meetings. The meetings have been tremendously useful and a range of issues have been identified.

The process being undertaken by HCIA is designed to accredit HCIA practices but not the practitioners within these practices. The latter is clearly the responsibility of the professional organisations.

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The OHS has been briefed on several occasions and is supportive of the work that HCIA is doing.

The aim is to have firm proposals for accreditation ready for the HCIA Board to consider for adoption by the end of 2010.

Early investigation and consultation suggest a few points need to be resolved:

- Who undertakes the accreditation?
- Is a new organisation set up or one of the existing accreditation bodies used?
- Is the system of accreditation open to non-HCIA members who wish to become accredited?
- How does one deal with the internal accreditation process that already exists within a number of companies?
- How does one stop the process becoming obscenely complicated and expensive as has been the experience of general practice and will the smaller practitioners be able to afford it?
- What are the incentives/benefits?
- What are the processes to be followed if a practice fails accreditation?

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- How does the process differ from OHS accreditation?
- What is the role of the professional bodies?
- What areas of practice should be covered under the accreditation process?

There may well be many other questions that you might have, or suggestions you want to make – they would all be welcome.

Any questions or comments that you may have can be directed to Donna Staunton, the Chief Executive Officer of the Hearing Care Industry Association, on donnas@hcia.com.au.

OTHER MATTERS...

NEW MINISTER

The Hon Mark Butler MP has now been appointed as the Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing with responsibility for hearing.

It is a well deserved promotion. Mark was very effective in his former role as Parliamentary Secretary for Health.

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He was elected to the House of Representatives for Port Adelaide, South Australia in 2007 and 2010 and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Health in 2009.

Mark was born in Canberra in 1970 and is married with two young children. He lives in South Australia and is a keen supporter of the AFL Team, Port Power.

Mark holds a First Class Honours Law Degree, an Arts Degree and a Masters degree in International Relations.

Mark was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003 for services to trade unionism. His grandfather and great-grandfather were both conservative Premiers of South Australia.

HCIA will be meeting with him shortly.

The Hon Justine Elliott MP, elected to take on a less onerous role as Parliamentary Secretary for Trade. HCIA had a good relationship with her and it is one we hope to continue with the current Minister.

OFFICE OF HEARING SERVICES

We continue to deal with the office on a regular basis. They have been briefed about our accreditation process a number of times and remain supportive.

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OHS is currently undertaking consultation with Approved Professional Bodies and HCIA about changes to the registration requirement for overseas trained practitioners.

HCIA will be meeting with them on the October 26TH to ensure our views are taken into consideration. The process that is now in place is very unwieldy and it severely limits the type of work that Overseas Trained Practitioners can undertake.

ASA

As you know in May this year we raised a number of issues with the ASA following publication of an article about Clinical Internships in the Autumn edition of 'Audiology Now'. The ASA responded fully to our concerns in September. The President indicated that a Clinical Internship Review Group had been formed and a full program of internship feedback would be undertaken in October and November.

This feedback would take the form of teleconferences and face to face meetings where Interns and Supervisors would be encouraged to provide constructive feedback on the two ways the Internship has operated during the course of the year. If you have the opportunity to participate in this feedback process, please take it.

The President also indicated that the review would look at the administration of the programs to ensure it is both effective and efficient. He said we could expect there to be a recommendation around the management of the Clinical Internships process to overcome the bottlenecks.



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The President also indicated the ASA will clarify issues concerning personal indemnity insurance and on site supervision of practitioners in the next edition of 'Audiology Now'. That is due to be published this week.

OTHER GROUPS IN HEARING HEALTH

We continue to build relationships with all groups within the hearing care industry. Those relationships will be important given it is likely that the Government will respond to the Senate Report on Hearing Healthcare in the near future. HCIA will continue to ensure its agenda is put in an appropriate manner.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO RING THE OFFICE ON 02-9327 8836 OR EMAIL ME. I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Donna Staunton

CEO

Hearing Care Industry Association