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Media Release

APC welcomes the public release of the NRAS review Final Report

APC welcomes the Final Report of the Independent Review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) for health professions that was considered by Health Ministers on Friday 7 August.

Debra Rowett, APC President, said “Accreditation is one of the underpinning platforms of NRAS that promotes safety and quality in health care. It demonstrates to the broader society a commitment to achieving high quality and safe care. We believe that the release of the Report is an opportunity for us to show the value of an independent pharmacy accreditation council. “

The Report highlights a number of potential areas for adjustment and improvement for the Scheme and we at APC believe that we are on the way to meeting these challenges.

- We recognise that Accreditation functions must represent value to the system. We have recently undertaken an organisational restructure and efficiency review to contain future costs and reduce regulatory burden, while maintaining quality of outcomes.
- We have recently reviewed our fee structures to ensure they are commensurate with current policy and processes.
 - From January 2016 providers with more than one university program will be charged less.
 - Intern training programs fees have not increased since 2010 and will remain at current levels.
 - The fee structure for CPD providers has been adjusted to reflect the audit and support work in this area from January 2016.
- In May this year we commenced a review of accreditation cycles to ensure that they reflect contemporary practices. This includes benchmarking our processes to others in Australia and the United Kingdom.

While all care was taken by the reviewers the report reveals that it is difficult to compare costs when functions undertaken by different Accreditation Councils can vary substantially.

For the public record we feel the need to highlight some inaccuracies within the economic analysis of the Report with respect to errors of fact.

1. **Numbers of accredited programs:** In 2014 we accredited 37 programs/organisations, not 24 as stated in the Report. This includes degrees, intern training programs and CPD organisations
2. **Additional costs attributed to accredited programs:** We conduct the Intern Written Exam on behalf of the Pharmacy Board of Australia. This is a situation that is unique to pharmacy. The Intern Written Examination is responsible for over 1/3 of operations and expenditure. This has not been considered in the comparative analysis undertaken

Consequently the actual costs per program in 2014 show pharmacy is ranked 5th out of the 14 Australian health professions in costs, not 2nd as in the report.

[w pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://w.pharmacycouncil.org.au) | [e admin@pharmacycouncil.org.au](mailto:e.admin@pharmacycouncil.org.au) | [p \(+ 61 2\) 6262 9628](tel:+61262629628) | [f \(+61 2\) 6247 9611](tel:+61262479611)

Level 2, Ethos House
28-36 Ainslie Place
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

PO Box 269
Civic Square ACT 2608
Australia

ACN 126 629 785 | ABN 45 568 153 354

We will be actively consulting with the Pharmacy Board of Australia, education providers, state and federal Health departments, Accreditation Councils and other stakeholders on the outcome of this Report. Our goal is that processes for Accreditation must:

1. be accountable
2. continually improve
3. safeguard high standards of care
4. create an environment in which excellence can flourish
5. achieve improved health outcomes for the Australian public

Media Contact

Bronwyn Clark
Chief Executive Officer
02 6262 9628

See also: www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Announcements/ArtMID/527/ArticleID/69/Communique-Final-Report-on-the-Independent-Review-of-the-National-Registration-and-Accreditation-Scheme-for-health-professionals

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