

Getting involved: organisations and authorities commonly referred to in the health sector

Some useful resources for health consumers to help broaden their knowledge about the health sector in Australia. All of these sites are publicly accessible and provide information about current developments, policies and issues about health care. A number of these organisations also produce electronic newsletters with free subscription.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC)

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care was created to lead and coordinate health care safety and quality improvements in Australia. The commission is funded by the Australian Government to lead and coordinated healthcare standards within Australia. It provides the standards that exist so far in Australia in regards to safety and quality of healthcare.

<http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/>

Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)

The peak body of the community services and welfare sector and the national voice for the needs of people affected by poverty and inequality.

www.acoss.org.au

Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (AHCRA)

AHCRA is working towards the reformation of the current Australian healthcare system to correct and identify existing problems in the health sector.

<http://www.healthreform.org.au/>

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

The organisation responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme* across Australia and supports the National Boards implement the National Scheme.

www.ahpra.gov.au

Australian Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care

This organisation aims at bringing patients, families and health professionals together in order to improve healthcare experiences for all, particularly patients. They are working towards the implementation of a more "patient centred" approach to care.

<http://www.aipfcc.org.au/>

Australian Medical Association (AMA)

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is the peak membership organisation representing the registered medical practitioners (doctors) and medical students of Australia. The AMA works to promote and protect the professional interests of doctors and the health care needs of patients and communities.

<https://ama.com.au/>

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation is the union for registered nurses, enrolled nurses, midwives, and assistants in nursing doing nursing work in every state and territory throughout Australia.

<http://anmf.org.au/>

Australian Policy Online

Australian Policy Online is a research database and alert service providing free access to full text research reports and papers, statistics and other resources essential for public policy development and implementation in Australia and New Zealand. APO produces a weekly electronic newsletter which highlights newly released material on a number of subjects including health.

<http://apo.org.au/about>

Better Health Channel

Provides information and health and medical services that are up to date and readily available. The site includes information on current medical developments and technologies and findings from evidence based research. The Better Health Channel is a useful way for consumers to learn about healthcare.

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/#>

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria provide care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged. They work closely with government and other support organisations to improve the lives of caring families throughout Victoria.

www.carersvictoria.org.au

Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH)

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health is a unique agency that provides specialist information, training and support on cultural diversity and wellbeing.

<http://www.ceh.org.au/>

Centre for Excellence in Peer Support (CEPS)

The Centre of Excellence in Peer Support provides a centralised specialist clearinghouse and online resource centre for mental health peer support. It works to address the growing interest in and recognition of peer support work, for both consumers and families/carers. It is intended for use by consumers, families/carers, peer support workers, community mental health organisations, NGOs and individuals who provide or want to provide peer support. It was launched in June 2011.

www.peersupportvic.org



Consumer Health Forum of Australia (CHF)

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, supported by accessible health information and systems.

<https://www.chf.org.au/>

Chronic Illness Alliance (CIA)

The aim of the Alliance is to build a better focus in health policy and health services for all people with chronic illnesses. It does this through education and research projects. The Chronic Illness Alliance has 55 member organisations, both state and national.

www.chronicillness.org.au

Collective of Self Help Groups (COSHG)

COSHG is a network of self-help and social action groups. These groups are made up of and controlled by people who are directly affected by a particular issue. COSHG acts as a clearing house and resource for people who want to contact groups, start or maintain a group.

www.coshg.org.au

Department of Health and Ageing (Federal)

Works to achieve better health and active ageing for all Australians. Areas of responsibility include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Ageing
- Conditions and Diseases
- Education and Prevention
- Ethical Issues
- Gene Technology
- Health products and medicines
- Medicare
- Mental Health
- National Men's and Women's Health
- Palliative Care
- Pharmacy
- Public and private healthcare
- Rural and Regional Health
- Services
- Travel Health Information

www.health.gov.au



Department of Health and Human Services Victoria (DHHS)

On 1 January 2015, the Victorian Government established the Department of Health & Human Services, bringing together the former Department of Health, Department of Human Services and Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The department has been established to develop and deliver policies, programs and services that support and enhance the wellbeing of all Victorians. We take a broad view of the causes of ill health, the drivers of good health, the social and economic context in which people live, and of the incidence and experience of vulnerability. This will allow us to place people at the heart of policy-making, service design and delivery

<http://dhhs.vic.gov.au/>

Health Direct

Health Direct deliver health services by contracting with service providers, managing ongoing operations and implementing governance structures so that our health services are provided safely and efficiently. All services are wholly or jointly funded by federal, state and territory governments.

Healthdirect Australia manages the following healthcare services:

- healthdirect nurse helpline and health information
- after hours GP helpline
- Pregnancy, Birth and Baby
- mindhealthconnect
- National Health Services Directory
- My Aged Care
- Carer Gateway

<http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/>

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

Works to promote and protect human rights in Australia. Statutory responsibilities include:

- education and public awareness
- discrimination and human rights complaints
- human rights compliance
- policy and legislative development

www.humanrights.gov.au

The Lowitja Institute

The Lowitja Institute is Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. The institute works in partnership at every stage of its research with Aboriginal organisations, health services, academic institutions and government agencies as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to decide priorities, conduct the research and put the findings into practice.

<http://www.lowitja.org.au/>

Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)

The Medical Services Advisory Committee is an independent expert committee that provides advice to the Minister for Health on the strength of the evidence relating to the comparative safety, clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of any new or existing medical service or technology, and the circumstances under which public funding should be supported through listing on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

<http://www.msac.gov.au/>

Medical Board of Australia (MBA)

The role of the Medical board of Australia is to regulate Australia's medical practitioners. This includes: registering medical practitioners and medical students, developing standards, codes and guidelines for the medical profession, investigating notifications and complaints, assessing International Medical Graduates who wish to practise in Australia and approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study. The MBA is supported by Boards in each State and Territory.

<http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/>

Medicare

Medicare is a universal healthcare system, which provides Australians with access to free or low-cost healthcare services. It is considered to be a public health insurance provider.

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/medicare-services>

Mental Health Complaints Commissioner

The Mental Health Complaints Commissioner is an independent voice working for positive change in Victoria's mental health system. It is an independent specialist statutory body established under the Mental Health Act 2014.

This body deals with complaints about Victorian public mental health services:

- Assist people to speak up about their concerns.
- Listen and work to resolve complaints about Victorian public mental health services.
- Support Victorian public mental health services to develop effective responses to the concerns and complaints of people accessing their services.
- Use what we learn from complaints to assist mental health services make positive changes.

<http://www.mhcc.vic.gov.au/about.htm>

MIND Australia

A leading provider of community mental health services. They support clients to live independent, productive and purposeful lives. They promote the fact that it is possible for everyone to have a full and meaningful life, including people with severe and persistent mental health issues. Mind delivers services informed by evidence and consistent with a social model of health.

www.mindaustralia.org.au

National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA)

This authority provides a safer and more efficient to clinicians needing access to patients' healthcare histories. It also maintains high standards of patient privacy and protects the security of information. This is the organisation administering the establishment of the My Health Record.

<http://www.nehta.gov.au/>

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) decided in 2008 to establish a single National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme) for registered health practitioners. The professions regulated by the National Board are:

- chiropractors
- dental practitioners
- medical practitioners
- nurses and midwives
- optometrists
- osteopaths
- pharmacists
- physiotherapists
- podiatrists
- psychologists
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners
- Chinese medicine practitioners
- medical radiation practitioners
- occupational therapists

<https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nras>

National Rural Health Alliance

The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia's peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health. The Alliance comprises 37 Member Bodies, each of which is a national organisation. They include consumer groups, representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, health professional organisations and service providers.

<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/>

NPS

Formerly known as the National Prescribing Service, NPS MedicineWise is an independent, evidence-based and not-for-profit organisation providing practical tools and information about medicines, health conditions and medical tests. They assist individuals to make better decisions about their health and medicines and they keep health professionals up to date with the latest evidenced-based information.

www.nps.org.au

Our Community

Australia's Centre for Excellence for the nation's 600,000 not-for-profits and schools, providing advice, tools, resources and training.

www.ourcommunity.com.au

Office of the Health Services Commissioner (OHSC)

The Health Services Commission responds to consumers with concerns about with a health service or health privacy. The Health Services Commissioner:

- Provides a free and confidential service
- Helps people make their concerns known to health services providers.
- Protects your right of access to your health information.
- Conciliates formally or informally, between consumers and providers of services.
- Assists in the resolution of complaints.

www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc

Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)

An independent statutory body established by the Victorian State Government to protect and promote the interests, rights and dignity of people with a disability.

www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

Primary Health Networks (PHNs)

PHNs have replaced Medicare Locals. They have been established with the key objectives of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PHN-Home>

Social Determinants of Health Alliance (SDOHA)

The Social Determinants of Health Alliance was formed in October 2012 with the goal of working with governments to improve health outcomes for all Australians, and especially among those who are subject to social or economic disadvantage. The Alliance membership includes Australia's leading health equity researchers -- some of whom were involved in the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health -- as well as leading health promotion and social service organisations.

Individuals can be listed on the SDOHA website as supporters of the Alliance.

<http://socialdeterminants.org.au/>

Therapeutic Goods Administration

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is part of the Australian Government Department of Health (link is external), and is responsible for regulating therapeutic goods including prescription medicines, vaccines, sunscreens, vitamins and minerals, medical devices, blood and blood products.

Almost any product for which therapeutic claims are made must be entered in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) before it can be supplied in Australia.

<https://www.tga.gov.au/>

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc. (VACCHO)

VACCHO is at heart and by constitution an Aboriginal community organisation. Our Aboriginality is intrinsic to our identity, essential to our communities and part of our world. Our Members' cultural identities are an important source of strength and this informs our ways of working and our integrity.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) have a proud history as sustainable, grassroots organisations that assist in building community capacity for self-determination. ACCHOs are committed to assisting every Aboriginal person to realise their full potential as a human being and as a member of their community.

<http://www.vaccho.org.au/>

Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS)

The peak organisation of the non-government social and community services sector, raising awareness of and working to reduce poverty and inequality in Victoria. We are a society where people are interdependent of one another and committed to living out the principles of equity and justice. We respect the land we live in and recognise the indigenous custodians of the country.

www.vcooss.org.au

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body with responsibilities under three laws:

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Commission's role is to educate people about the rights and responsibilities contained in the Charter and to report annually to the government about the operation of the Charter. The Commission does not handle complaints related to the Charter.

www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)

The peak Victorian non-government organisation for people who have experience with a mental illness or emotional distress. VMIAC engages in a number of activities, which include information provision, advice, mutual support and self-help, individual, group and systemic advocacy, research and evaluation, and education and training.

<http://www.vmiac.org.au/>

Updated April 2016



Health Issues Centre
Consumer voices for better healthcare