

SONOGRAPHER REGISTRATION WORKING PARTY^R

representing the profession's associations:



SONOGRAPHER REGISTRATION WILL HAPPEN - HELP US TO MAKE IT HAPPEN ON OUR TERMS

What the current accreditation system means:

Since 2001 the Australasian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR) has been the body for accreditation of sonographers in Australia. This involves:

- . Assessing and evaluating education and training courses and institutions to uphold standards and consistency of sonographer education and training
- . Ensuring sonographers meet the required level of expertise and maintain that level via mandatory continuing professional development (CPD).

The Sonographer Registration Working Party, comprising representatives of all professional associations and stakeholders - ASA, AIR, ASUM, CSANZ and ASAR - has been formed to work towards developing a national sonographer registration board.

What future national Sonographer Registration would mean for you and the ultrasound profession:

- . Offers protection to patients and the community by assuring the quality and safety of ultrasound service provision by registered sonographers
- . Enhanced accountability of practitioners in ultrasound
- . Avoids the multiplicity of state based registration boards and their associated fees, thus facilitating interstate work opportunities
- . Uniform national standards - assessment of character and fitness to practice
- . Recognition of sonography as an allied health profession
- . Protection of the title "sonographer".

All enquiries should be addressed to the Secretariat.

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REGISTRATION FOR SONOGRAPHERS

What it means for cardiac sonography

Currently, sonographers, regardless of specialty, do not need to be registered – accredited, yes, based on educational standards and maintenance of professional standards and practice via participation in an approved CPD program.

Registration is the norm for nurses, doctors, radiographers, physiotherapists etc; each of these craft groups has a state-based registration board and all must be registered to practice. But registration is new territory for cardiac sonographers and technologists

What is registration? From the Productivity Commission report on the health sector (released 2005): “In broad terms registration is the process of legally recognising practitioners’ qualifications, experience, character and fitness to practice. Its purpose is to provide assurances of quality and safety, helping to overcome the information asymmetry between health professionals and patients.”

One of the recommendations from that report was that all health sector workers should be under the auspices of a single national registration board. A couple of groups are already actively lobbying against one national registration body for the entire health workforce; even drawing together one craft group under a national system would require changes to both state and federal legislation.

In response to the Productivity Commission’s report, the Sonographer Registration Working Party (SRWP) held its first formal meeting in February 2006. At the table were representatives from all stakeholder professional bodies: ASA, ASAR, ASUM, AIR and CSANZ.

Sonographers already have a national *accreditation* board, ASAR, which is a unique position across the Australian health sector. By developing a model for national *registration* based on the ASAR, it is hoped that sonography will retain control over its own professional matters for which a registration board is required. Given the small size of the profession, a national registration board would be significantly cheaper to operate (and keep fees as low as possible) than several state-based registration boards.

The SRWP have approached the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) for funding to develop a national registration model. Representatives were interested to hear that the working party had been formed and was moving forward with this process. The department commented that it was logical to extend the current accreditation scheme to registration but commenting that currently there is no national framework for registration.

The time-line for registration is approximately 2 years; this developmental process needs funding (currently representatives are being funded by their stakeholder groups) which has been requested from the DoHA. Please forward any queries to Di Jackson.

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