

Scheme Application Redesign Project

We are improving how we ask occupational associations to apply for a professional standards scheme.

We want to make **applying for a professional standards scheme more user friendly, more efficient and faster, with a strong focus on** consumer protection and the public interest. We also want to establish strong ongoing regulatory relationships and to encourage a focus on improving standards and risk management through participation in the scheme. The new application process, guidance, templates and evidence requirements will ensure we meet these objectives.

Work is already underway. We started in February 2020, will complete the redesign in December 2020 and begin using the new application in January 2021.

Engagement and communication

We aim to engage associations through one-on-one interviews conducted by an independent consultant, as well as focussed conferencing and feedback sessions. We will use the results, along with journey mapping, a scan of good practice in other jurisdictions and an analysis of the relevant legislative and regulatory framework within which the application must work, to inform elements of the redesign.

We also aim to establish a small Reference Group taking responsibility for reviewing and providing opinion and advice in relation to our proposals and other related work in the redesign. It is intended that membership will include associations who are members of the scheme, regulatory experts, other organisations with comparable regulatory functions and the Councils.

Planned features of the new application design

The improvements we develop together will be aimed at making the application process:

- **Consumer oriented** –with a strong focus on consumer protection through the improvement of occupational standards
- **Contemporary** – by using digital technologies to provide evidence to support an application
- **Certain** – with simple and clear guidance on what information is required at the various stages of the application and how it will be used in analysing applications

Planned features of the new application design include:

- **Reporting** – Alignment between the application and the annual Professional Standards Improvement Program reporting requirements to ensure consistency and efficiency
- **Scalable** – Providing associations with an application process which is proportionate to their size and type
- **Modular** – Enable associations to progress through the application process, completing modules sequentially and cumulatively

- **Measured** - Providing the right guidance and assistance at the right time and in the most straightforward way
- **Regulation** – Helping associations to demonstrate in the best possible way how they are regulating their members to protect consumers and improve standards

The design process

We will draw together what we learn from consultation with our stakeholders, the process review, good practice scan and legislative/regulatory framing to identify a range of possible design solutions. We will review these with the Reference Group and associations who have expressed an interest in being involved in this project. We have also identified several elements that we believe can be developed as quick-wins and will push these forward as part of this work.

Design includes producing:

- guidance to associations who wish to apply to have a scheme approved,
- templates for associations to use for their application,
- evidence criteria associations must meet in their application,
- guidelines for how applications will be assessed, and
- tools for the analysis of applications and recommendations for statutory decision making.

We will test the new application for how well the process works, combined with feedback from a small number of test-users. Once testing is satisfactorily completed and any changes identified during that stage have been made, we will go live with the new application in January 2021.

A benefits management plan and delivery schedule will be developed mid-year. It will map our objectives to tangible benefits, with associated performance measures that we will use after application go-live, as well as stakeholder feedback, to measure our success on an ongoing basis.

The Professional Standards Councils

The **Professional Standards Councils** and its agency, the **Professional Standards Authority**, work to improve professional standards and protect consumers of professional services across Australia.

We are the independent statutory bodies established in each state and territory with specific responsibilities under [professional standards legislation](#) for assessing and approving applications for, and supervising the operation of, [professional standards schemes](#). The Professional Standards Authority supports the Professional Standards Councils of each state and territory to lead the national system of professional standards regulation.