

General Warning

The purpose of this fact sheet is to give general introductory information about the complaints process. It does not contain legal advice.

WARNING: Alternative legal action should be considered before making a complaint. What is included in a complaint may be relevant to any current or future legal proceedings. If you are involved in legal action you should immediately see a lawyer and not proceed with a complaint.

If you (or the complainant, if you are complaining on their behalf) want financial compensation, support or money you should see a lawyer before making a complaint.

General complaint information

Complaints are rarely about just one thing. When you have a problem, it may be that a number of things have gone wrong. Below are some of the common areas where issues may arise that could lead to a complaint.

Discrimination	Disability and NDIS services	Policing, Custody and Detention
Seniors and Aged Care supports and services	Consumer and Business disputes	Phone and Internet services
Banking, Insurance and Superannuation	Energy and Water services	Housing and Real Estate
Health Care services	Employment issues	Education and Training providers
Government Agencies and Departments	Child Safety and Protection	State Fines and Debts
Corruption	Privacy and Access to Information	Media and Publications

There are different complaint bodies to handle different types of complaints. You should consider the different pathways available to decide the most appropriate pathway for your circumstances. One event could lead to multiple complaints. That means you may need to lodge more than one complaint to have all of your concerns addressed.

The online triage tool on this website can help you to identify the different complaint bodies that may be able to assist you.

It is usually quickest and easiest to try to resolve a complaint directly with the person or body you are having a problem with. Many complaint handling bodies will not act on a complaint unless you have tried to resolve your complaint directly. If you do not feel it is safe or appropriate to complain directly, you should contact the relevant complaint body to discuss your situation.

Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints that about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis of: race; sex; gender; disability; age; sexuality; relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

WARNING: The state and federal bodies that handle discrimination complaints have different rules, including time limits. You can make a complaint to both the state and federal complaint bodies, but they may decide not to address your concerns if you have already complained elsewhere. For example, if you have already lodged a discrimination complaint to anti-discrimination NSW, it is likely that Australian Human Rights Commission will decide not to act on your complaint. Please carefully review the discrimination factsheets for information about your options before making a discrimination complaint.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (**AHPRA**). We outline how complaints can be made by people to the AHPRA.

The AHPRA works in partnership with the National Boards to ensure that Australia's registered health practitioners are suitably trained, qualified and safe to practise.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the **National Law**) was enacted in each state and territory of Australia in 2009 and 2010 and aims to create a national registration and accreditation scheme for registered health practitioners. The National Law is not a Commonwealth law. Instead, it is enacted and implemented by each state and territory using an 'adoption of laws' model. Queensland is the lead jurisdiction for implementing the National Law. If amendments are made to the National Law after approval by the Ministerial Council, Queensland, then any changes are automatically applied in all other parliaments that are part of the National Scheme, except Western Australia and South Australia. The National Law framework is set out below:

- Queensland (lead State) – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act \(Qld\)](#)
- ACT – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law \(ACT\) Act 2010](#)
- Northern Territory – [Health Practitioner Regulation \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2010](#)
- South Australia – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law \(South Australia\) Act 2010](#)
- Tasmania – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law \(Tasmania\) Act 2010](#)
- Victoria – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law \(Victoria\) Act 2009](#)
- Western Australia – [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Act 2024](#)

AHPRA has five core functions – registration, accreditation, notifications, compliance, and setting professional standards.

Key Terms: Below are key terms that appear throughout this factsheet and their meaning.

AHPRA means Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

National Boards means each of the 15 national boards including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, Chiropractic Board of Australia, Dental Board of Australia, Medical Board of Australia, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, Optometry Board of Australia, Osteopathy Board of Australia, Paramedicine Board of Australia, Pharmacy Board of Australia, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, Podiatry Board of Australia and Psychology Board of Australia.

Step 1: What type of Complaints can be made to this body?

<p>Complaints can be made about safety concerns raised about registered health practitioners, students and unregistered people claiming to be health practitioners. AHPRA focuses on complaints about, but not limited to:</p>	
Sub-category	Example
Unsafe care	<p>You should make a complaint if you have concerns about the level of care provided by an AHPRA-regulated practitioner</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gertrude's late family member received medical treatment that she believes was inappropriate and contributed to their worsening condition. She has concerns that the practitioner failed to follow proper medical procedures. • Aameena sees a practitioner for treatment and when they are discussing her health concern the practitioner mentions an x-ray of her broken leg. Aameena is confused and tells the practitioner that she has never had a broken leg. The practitioner checks the date of birth recorded on the x-ray and realises that the x-ray has been filed in the wrong patient file. • Rosie, a 24-year-old First Nations woman, lives in a rural community and has an ongoing health condition that needs regular care. Rosie visited a practitioner who did not provide culturally safe care as he was not willing to work closely with Rosie's family who are helping her at home. This made Rosie feel uncomfortable as she wasn't being listened to or receiving culturally safe care.
Unprofessional behaviour	<p>You should make a complaint if a practitioner accepts inappropriate gifts or engages in unprofessional conduct.</p> <p><i>Example: Sadia, an aged care resident, regularly visited her GP. After she passed away, her family found out that the GP had accepted expensive gifts, including jewellery and money, and had been added to her will. They were concerned that the GP took advantage of Sadia and did not maintain professional boundaries.</i></p> <p>You should make a complaint if a practitioner communicates in a disrespectful or aggressive manner.</p> <p><i>Example: Stevie asked a pharmacist to change a dose administration aid for a family member with an intellectual disability. The pharmacist reacted rudely and aggressively, leading to an argument. The verbal confrontation negatively affected Stevie, especially because their family member had an intellectual disability and was considered an at-risk patient.</i></p>
Practitioner health	<p>You should make a complaint if you believe a practitioner's health condition is affecting their ability to provide safe care.</p> <p><i>Example: During a routine check-up, Bob noticed a strong smell of alcohol on his GP's breath and that the GP was slurring their words. Bob was concerned that the practitioner's condition could put patients at risk.</i></p>

Concerns about student clinicians and criminal offences	<p>You should make a complaint if you have concerns about a student clinician's criminal history or health condition affecting their ability to practise safely.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While visiting a medical clinic, Darcy recognised a student clinician from a news article about drug-related offences at a music festival. The student had been convicted of serious drug charges. Darcy is concerned about whether the student met the standards for safe practice. • Mia needed physiotherapy treatment and booked an appointment with a practitioner advertising their services online. After her session, Mia looked up the practitioner's details on AHPRA's public register and couldn't find their name. She realised that the person was falsely claiming to be a registered physiotherapist.
Falsely using a protected health title	<p>You should make a complaint if someone claims to be a health practitioner, like a doctor, psychologist, nurse or physiotherapist, but they are not registered. It's illegal to use a protected title if you aren't qualified and registered to practise in that profession.</p> <p><i>Example: Minh saw a person on social media advertising themselves as a "Doctor of Natural Medicine" offering treatments for chronic illness. When Minh checked the AHPRA register, the person wasn't listed as a registered health practitioner in any profession.</i></p>
Advertising health services in a misleading or unsafe way	<p>You should make a complaint if a person or business advertises a health service in a way that is false, misleading, or likely to cause harm. This includes fake reviews, miracle cure claims, or offering free gifts without proper terms and conditions.</p> <p><i>Example: Farah saw an ad that promised a guaranteed cancer cure through alternative medicine and featured fake patient testimonials. The ad didn't explain any risks or real evidence. Farah was worried the ad could mislead vulnerable people and cause harm.</i></p>
Exclusions	<p>AHPRA does not handle complaints relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professions that aren't regulated by AHPRA, such as dietitians, massage therapists, personal care workers, or social workers. • Health services or organisations, such as a clinic, community health centre, hospital or mental health service. • Government-funded aged care providers, unless they are individual registered practitioners. • Disability service providers.

Step 2: What is the Jurisdiction of the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
State	AHPRA has the power to hear complaints under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, which is enacted in each state and territory.
Geographical Scope	AHPRA has the power to act on complaints about the conduct of health practitioners, students and unregistered people claiming to be health practitioners.
Time limitations	There is no legal timeframe to raise a concern. However, it is usually better not to let too much time pass before reporting concerns to AHPRA. If a concern is raised many years after the event, it can be difficult to rely on recollections of events or to find all relevant records. Additionally, if the practitioner or student has passed away, AHPRA will be unable to progress it.
Exclusions	<p>Outside Australia</p> <p>AHPRA cannot provide assistance with complaints that arise in relation to health services that were provided or incidents that occurred outside Australia.</p> <p>New South Wales or Queensland</p> <p>There are different arrangements for students and health practitioners practising in Queensland and New South Wales. To find out more about healthcare complaints in these states, contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NSW Health Professional Councils Authority the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission Queensland's Office of the Health Ombudsman.
Exercise of discretion	<p>AHPRA may exercise discretion in acting on concerns raised to it. Concerns must meet the legal grounds to constitute a “notification”. This means your concerns must be about a registered health practitioner who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not provide safe care because their standard of professional conduct was too low, and/or does not have reasonable knowledge, skill or judgement or exercise enough care, and/or is not a suitable person to hold registration, and/or is or may be ill and pose a risk to the public, and/or has or may have broken the National Law, and/or has or may have breached a condition on their registration or an undertaking, and/or obtained their registration improperly. <p>AHPRA may also not progress your notification if within 30 days AHPRA cannot establish that your concerns are grounds for a</p>

	notification. AHPRA will write to you and tell you it can't take any further action.
Additional information you need to know	<p>If you are not sure if your complaint is within the jurisdiction of the AHPRA you can discuss your situation with AHPRA by calling 1300 419 495 (Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm (local time)).</p> <p>More information about the types of complaints AHPRA can and cannot handle can also be found on the AHPRA website here.</p>

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Complaints can be made about safety concerns raised about registered health practitioners, students and unregistered people claiming to be health practitioners.	
Respondent	Description
Registered health practitioners or students	<p>AHPRA or a National Board may investigate a practitioner or student if they perceive risks to the public that are significant because of a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single, serious, one off concern that has not been appropriately dealt with; • single, serious, one off concern that cannot appropriately be managed without regulatory intervention; or • series of concerns that represent that might represent a pattern of behaviour that requires our intervention.
Unregistered people claiming to be health practitioners	<p>Under the National Law, it is unlawful to knowingly or recklessly claim to be a registered health practitioner, when you are not.</p> <p>This can include using a title, name, initial, symbol, word or description which could be reasonably understood to indicate that an individual is a health practitioner or qualified to practise in a registered health profession.</p> <p>AHPRA can investigate offences which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowingly or recklessly holding yourself out to be registered in a division of a health profession when you are not; or claiming to be qualified to practice as a health practitioner • claiming that another individual is a registered health practitioner when they are not • claiming to be a specialist practitioner, if the person is not registered in that recognised specialty. It is also an offence to claim someone else is registered in a particular profession or division or holds specialist registration, when they do not.
Unlawful advertisers of	<p>AHPRA can investigate offences where a person has advertised a regulated health service or a business providing a regulated health service in a way that:</p>

regulated health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is false, misleading or deceptive • uses gifts, discounts or inducements without the terms and conditions of the offer • uses a testimonial or purported testimonial • creates an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment, or • directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.
Exclusions	<p>AHPRA can only take action against individual registered health practitioners, students, or people pretending to be registered.</p> <p>You can't make a complaint about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitals, clinics or community health services • Aged care providers, unless you're reporting a registered individual who works there • Disability services, unless you're concerned about a registered individual • Health professionals in unregistered roles (e.g. massage therapists, dietitians, personal care workers, counsellors, social workers) <p>If your complaint is about a health organisation, you should contact your state or territory health complaints body instead.</p>

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	<p>Anyone can make a complaint to AHPRA.</p> <p>Notifications can be made anonymously, meaning AHPRA will not record your name as the notifier. AHPRA may assign a pseudonym (a false name) for a notifier who wishes to be anonymous.</p>
Have you tried to resolve your complaint directly?	<p>If you have questions about your healthcare, it is okay to ask questions and seek explanations. You can do this while you are receiving care, or after you have stopped. Sometimes talking to the practitioner or health service provider to understand what happened can resolve your concerns.</p> <p>A practitioner is the person who treated you such as a doctor, nurse or dentist. A health service is the hospital or clinic where you had your appointment.</p> <p>If you don't get the answers you are seeking or things go wrong then you can make a complaint directly to the practitioner or health service.</p> <p>This is often the quickest and easiest way to have your concern resolved.</p>
Is there a more appropriate	<p>When the AHPRA receives a complaint, it will first consider whether AHPRA can look into the issue being raised. If AHPRA determines that</p>

organisation to resolve your complaint?	your complaint is not about safety concerns raised about registered health practitioners, students and unregistered people claiming to be health practitioners, AHPRA will write to you and explain and tell you why AHPRA can't take any further action.
Can a complaint be made on behalf of someone?	<p>Yes. You can raise a concern on behalf of another person or have someone act on your behalf during the process. For someone to act on your behalf, AHPRA will need your written consent. This is particularly important if you were the patient and you are nominating another party to act as your representative throughout the process because AHPRA will provide that party with all relevant information related to the matter. This may include health records or other personal information about you.</p> <p>You can find more information under AHPRA's Privacy policy.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>Free complaints process</p> <p>AHPRA's services are free. You do not need a lawyer for the complaint process, but you can seek legal advice at any time.</p> <p>Limitations of anonymous and confidential complaints</p> <p>AHPRA will aim to assist people who wish to make a complaint. However, it may be difficult (and sometimes impossible) for AHPRA to progress a complaint without certain information such as the name of the relevant health practitioner or notifier. AHPRA requests that complainants contact AHPRA by phone to make an anonymous or confidential complaint so AHPRA can talk in detail about any limitations AHPRA may face in progressing the matter. To contact AHPRA by phone, please call 1300 419 495 (Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm (local time)). More information about anonymous and confidential complaints is available here.</p>

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
No further action	<p>There are different reasons why a AHPRA or a National Board may decide to take no further action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if there is no ongoing risk to the public that it needs to manage, or • because of the action already taken by the individual and/or their workplace there is no future risk to the patient. <p>This does not mean your concern was not taken seriously. The details of your concern will remain on record and may be taken into consideration at a later time if another similar complaint or concern is made about the practitioner.</p> <p>If the Board decides to take no further action, AHPRA will contact you and explain the reasons for the Board's decision.</p> <p>AHPRA may also refer you to another organisation that may be able to provide help.</p>

Referral	<p>If, in reviewing a concern, AHPRA or a National Board determines that it is not the appropriate body to handle a matter, it may refer the concern to another agency. Other agencies can include health complaints entities, the Coroner's Court, the police or Medicare.</p> <p>AHPRA or the Board can refer the entire complaint or specific and relevant aspects to that other agency.</p> <p>If this happens, AHPRA will tell you, the practitioner, and others involved that the National Board has decided to refer the matter to another agency.</p>
Undertakings	<p>AHPRA and National Boards can accept an undertaking from a practitioner to limit the practitioner's practice in some way if this is necessary to protect the public. The undertaking means the practitioner agrees to do, or to not do something in relation to their profession.</p> <p>Once an undertaking is accepted from a practitioner, it becomes a legal obligation on the practitioner and no right of appeal is available.</p> <p>The undertaking is published on the register of practitioners and may be viewed publicly at any time. When a National Board decides the undertaking is no longer required to protect the public, it is revoked and will be removed from the national register of practitioners.</p> <p>If the undertaking relates to a practitioner's health, limited information about the undertaking is published on the public register.</p> <p>A National Board cannot seek an undertaking from a practitioner, or compel or require a practitioner to provide an undertaking. It is the practitioner's undertaking and can only be given voluntarily by the practitioner to a National Board.</p>
Conditions	<p>A condition restricts a practitioner's practice in some way. Imposing a condition means the practitioner needs to do something, or is prevented from doing something, in relation to their profession.</p> <p>A National Board can impose a condition on the registration of a practitioner or student, or on an endorsement of registration, to protect the public.</p> <p>Unlike an undertaking, a condition is an instrument used by the National Board and can be imposed on a practitioner's registration, with or without the practitioner's agreement.</p> <p>It is important to remember that conditions can also be placed on a practitioner's registration for reasons that are not disciplinary, such as for a practitioner who is returning to practice after a break or for health reasons.</p> <p>Conditions that restrict a practitioner's practice of the profession are published on the public register of practitioners. When a National Board decides the conditions are no longer needed to protect the public, they are removed from the practitioner's registration and no longer published.</p>

Caution	<p>A National Board may caution a practitioner. A caution is a like a written warning and is intended to act as a deterrent so that the practitioner does not repeat the conduct or behaviour.</p> <p>A caution is not usually recorded on the public register but may be if the National Board considers it appropriate to do so.</p>
Suspension	<p>If a practitioner's registration is suspended, they cannot practise their profession until a National Board or a tribunal revokes the suspension.</p> <p>A tribunal has the power to suspend a practitioner's registration after a matter has been referred to the tribunal for a hearing by a National Board.</p> <p>A National Board may suspend a practitioner as a form of immediate action in the public interest, if it believes the practitioner presents a serious and immediate risk to public and that a suspension is the proportionate way to address that risk until the matter has been resolved.</p> <p>Read more about immediate action.</p> <p>A health panel can suspend a practitioner's registration if the panel finds that the practitioner (or student) has an impairment and it is necessary to suspend the practitioner's registration to protect the public.</p>
Reprimand	<p>A reprimand is a formal way of rebuking or expressing disapproval to a practitioner for something they have done. A National Board can reprimand a practitioner after a performance or professional standards panel. A tribunal can reprimand a practitioner after a tribunal hearing.</p> <p>Reprimands issued since the start of the National Scheme are published on the national register of practitioners.</p>
Cancellation of registration	<p>A health practitioner whose registration has been cancelled is forbidden from practising the profession or working in any way as a health practitioner in that profession in all Australian states and territories.</p> <p>Only a court or a tribunal has the power to cancel a health practitioner's registration.</p> <p>Since 2010, all health practitioners who have had their registration cancelled by a court or tribunal, been disqualified from practice or had their registration prohibited appear on the cancelled health practitioners register.</p> <p>There is also a list of practitioners who have agreed not to practise when a National Board thinks this is in the public interest. There are circumstances when a practitioner will not appear on this list. Please call AHPRA for more information on 1300 419 495.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>The National Law sets down the minimum grounds for AHPRA to accept a notification (section 144) in relation to a registered health practitioner or student. Specifically, AHPRA and the National Boards can only consider a complaint against a registered health</p>

	<p>practitioner or student if the registered health practitioner or student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> behaved in a way that was below the professional standard the public or the practitioner's peers might expect does not have the level of professional knowledge, skill or judgement that would be expected or the practitioner does not exercise enough care in the way they carry out their profession is not a suitable person to hold registration is or may be ill and/or have an impairment, and pose a risk to the public has or may have breached the National Law has, or may have, breached a condition on their registration or an undertaking, and/or obtained their registration improperly. <p>When you submit a concern, you need to provide enough information for AHPRA to consider it. AHPRA will contact you to find out more if the initial information you provide is insufficient. If AHPRA cannot establish that one or more of these grounds exist AHPRA will contact you and tell you why AHPRA cannot progress your complaint.</p> <p>More information about AHPRA's outcomes can be found here.</p>
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Step 6: Preparing your complaint. What should your complaint look like? What should it include?

Requirement	Description
Format	<p>General concerns</p> <p>Complaints can be lodged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By phone: 1300 419 495 Online, using the online complaint form available here; <p>Complex or less urgent complaints are usually better submitted in online so you can provide supporting documentation.</p> <p>If you would like the assistance of an interpreter or translator this can be arranged by the AHPRA free of charge.</p> <p>The quickest and easiest way for most people to raise a concern with AHPRA is via the online form. If you are unsure about raising your concerns, you can contact AHPRA and ask general questions about AHPRA or the process.</p> <p>Criminal offences</p> <p>Criminal complaints can be lodged by completing the form available here and sending it to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By email: offence.complaints@ahpra.gov.au; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mail: Attention: Offence Assessment Team, AHPRA, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001 <p>You can also call AHPRA on 1300 419 495.</p>
Personal Details	<p>You should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your first and last name Email address Contact number <p>Notifications can be made anonymously, meaning AHPRA don't record your name as the notifier. AHPRA may assign a pseudonym (a false name) for a notifier who wants to be anonymous.</p> <p>AHPRA ask that people who want to make anonymous or confidential notifications clearly explain why they want to do so when they first contact AHPRA.</p> <p>AHPRA's online form does not allow for anonymous or confidential notifications. If you want to make anonymous or confidential notification, please call AHPRA on 1300 419 495. When you call, AHPRA talk through your and AHPRA's understanding of the concerns being raised and discuss any limitations AHPRA may face in progressing the matter.</p>
Respondent's Details	<p>You should provide the name of the health professional or service provider that your complaint relates to.</p>
Relevant Facts	<p>You should provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the conduct you are complaining about occurred any communications there has been between you and the respondent organisation. details of what happened after you complained to the respondent about the problem. What do you want to happen for your complaint to be resolved? <p>You should provide as much detail as possible to help AHPRA understand your complaint.</p> <p>If you have any documents to support your complaint they should be provided, including any correspondence you had with the health professional.</p> <p>If you lodge your complaint through AHPRA's online complaint form you can attach supporting documents.</p>
What NOT to include	<p>False or misleading statements</p> <p>You will be required to make a declaration that the information you have provided is true and correct. Do not make false or misleading statements. This is an offence.</p>

	Vexatious notifications You should not make a vexatious notification. AHPRA has processes to handle vexatious notifications. A vexatious notification (concern) is one without substance, made with an intent to cause distress, detriment or harassment to a practitioner named in the notification. Vexatious notifications can come from anyone including patients, members of the public and other practitioners.
Additional information you need to know	The complaint form will require you to authorise the AHPRA to share personal information contained in this form, such as relevant correspondence, with the organisation it relates to. AHPRA will also collect, use, store and disclose personal and health information in accordance with their privacy policy.

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	General concerns Complaints can be lodged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By phone: 1300 419 495 • Online, using the online complaint form available here; Complex or less urgent complaints are usually better submitted in online so you can provide supporting documentation. If you would like the assistance of an interpreter or translator this can be arranged by the AHPRA free of charge. The quickest and easiest way for most people to raise a concern with AHPRA is via the online form. If you are unsure about raising your concerns, you can contact AHPRA and ask general questions about AHPRA or the process. Criminal offences Criminal complaints can be lodged by completing the form available here and sending it to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By email: offence.complaints@ahpra.gov.au; or • By mail: Attention: Offence Assessment Team, AHPRA, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001 • You can also call AHPRA on 1300 419 495.
Receipt	The National Law requires that investigations happen in a timely way. AHPRA aims to acknowledge receipt of a complaint within three working days. Most notifications are closed within 90 days.

Initial assessment	<p><u>How AHPRA assesses your complaint:</u></p> <p>Once AHPRA has enough information and knows which health practitioner the complaint is about, it will carry out an initial assessment.</p> <p>During this step, AHPRA looks at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the concern is • How serious the concern might be • Whether the practitioner's workplace or actions have already addressed the issue • Whether the practitioner's health, skills or behaviour may put the public at risk <p>AHPRA may contact you and the practitioner to get more details.</p> <p>AHPRA usually finishes this assessment in about 60 days.</p> <p><u>When AHPRA might take action right away:</u></p> <p>In some cases, AHPRA will start an investigation immediately, especially if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a serious one-off incident that hasn't been dealt with • The issue can't be managed safely without intervention • A pattern of behaviour shows an ongoing risk to the public <p>AHPRA may also take temporary protective steps while the investigation is happening.</p> <p><u>What can happen after the assessment:</u></p> <p>After reviewing the complaint, AHPRA or the National Board can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the complaint, for example, if it's low risk, resolved, or based on a misunderstanding • Take regulatory action, like a written warning (caution), conditions on practice, or accepting a formal undertaking from the practitioner • Refer the matter for investigation • Send the practitioner for a health or performance assessment • Refer the complaint to another agency if it's outside AHPRA's powers
Close the matter	<p>After assessing a concern, a AHPRA or a National Board can close the matter, where the concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not serious enough to warrant more detailed consideration • is made in circumstances where the Board considers it to be vexatious

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • was made as a result of a is understanding or misinterpretation • is one that can be resolved by the practitioner and / or their workplace taking appropriate action • arose out of an event that happened in the past and investigating won't be practicable • can be referred to another entity who is more appropriate to deal with the matter. <p>If this occurs, AHPRA will write to you and explain the outcome.</p>
Take regulatory action	<p>Following assessment, AHPRA or a National Board can take a regulatory action under the National Law such as issue a caution, enter into an undertaking, or impose conditions with a focus on improvement when the actions of an individual or health service are not enough.</p> <p>If this occurs, AHPRA will write to you and explain the outcome.</p>
Health or performance assessment	<p>Following assessment, AHPRA or a National Board can refer the health practitioner for a health or performance assessment.</p> <p>Health assessments</p> <p>A National Board may need a practitioner to undergo a health assessment if it reasonably believes that they have, or may have an impairment. A health assessment can include medical, physical, psychiatric or psychological examinations or tests to determine whether the person has an impairment.</p> <p>Performance assessments</p> <p>A National Board may need a health practitioner to undergo a performance assessment if it believes that the way they practise the profession is, or may be, unsatisfactory.</p> <p>AHPRA and the National Boards appoint the assessors to carry out the performance assessment. The assessors are not National Board members (or AHPRA staff members) and have been chosen to conduct the assessment because they have the expertise in a particular field of practice.</p> <p>The National Board selects an assessor whose scope of practice is similar to that of the practitioner being assessed. For example, a general practitioner who works in a rural and remote area might be assessed by a practitioner (assessor) who is familiar with the particular challenges of rural practice.</p>

Investigations

What AHPRA does when you make a complaint:

Once AHPRA has enough information and knows who the complaint is about, it does an initial check to decide what to do next. This usually takes around 60 days.

AHPRA will look at:

- What happened and how serious it is
- Whether the practitioner or their workplace has already fixed the problem
- Whether the practitioner's health, behaviour, or skills might be unsafe

You and the practitioner might be contacted for more information.

When AHPRA acts straight away:

AHPRA might investigate straight away if:

- It's a serious one-off incident
- The issue can't be managed safely without AHPRA's help
- There's a pattern of risky behaviour

They can also take temporary protective steps while the investigation is happening.

What AHPRA can do next:

After looking at your complaint, AHPRA or the National Board might:

- Close the complaint if there's no risk or it's already been handled
- Take action, like setting conditions, issuing a warning, or accepting a formal agreement from the practitioner
- Start a full investigation
- Refer the practitioner for a health or skills assessment
- Send your complaint to another agency if AHPRA isn't the right body to handle it

Panel and tribunal hearings	<p>Panel hearings</p> <p>A National Board has the power to establish two types of panel depending on the type of concerns identified. The panel will include health practitioners and a community representative. The panel will decide how the hearing will be conducted, but generally the process may be less formal than public hearing.</p> <p>A student can only be referred to a health panel and cannot be referred to a performance and professional standards panel.</p> <p>If a panel decides that a practitioner or student has an impairment, or that the practitioner has behaved in a way that constitutes unsatisfactory professional performance or unprofessional conduct, the panel may make certain findings including imposing conditions, suspending registration or caution or reprimand the practitioner</p> <p>Tribunal hearings</p> <p>A National Board or a panel can refer a matter to a tribunal for hearing. This happens only for the most serious allegations.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>Vexatious notifications</p> <p>You should not make a vexatious notification. AHPRA has processes to handle vexatious notifications. A vexatious notification (concern) is one without substance, made with an intent to cause distress, detriment or harassment to a practitioner named in the notification. Vexatious notifications can come from anyone including patients, members of the public and other practitioners.</p>

Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?

Avenue	Description
Internal review by AHPRA	<p>There are two main ways you can make a complaint about AHPRA or a National Board's service, actions or decisions. You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise a concern directly with the staff member responsible for managing your matter use our online complaint form. <p>Complaints can be made anonymously, and AHPRA will never take action against you for making a complaint.</p> <p>You can also call AHPRA on 1300 419 495, or complete the printable complaint form (593KB, PDF) and mail it to:</p> <p>Administrative Complaints</p>

	<p>G.P.O. Box 9958</p> <p>In your capital city</p> <p>AHPRA aims to resolve your complaint about AHPRA as soon as possible, while keeping you informed at each stage of the process.</p> <p>When AHPRA receives a complaint, it carefully reviews the information you have provided and how you would like to see your complaint resolved. AHPRA then conduct a review of the information it holds in its records.</p> <p>When we respond to your complaint, AHPRA may do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to fix the matter or correct an incorrect application of our policies or procedures. • Apologise to you. • Give you more information about how your matter was managed or a further explanation of our policies or procedures. • Undertake to review our practices, policies or procedures.
Appealing to National Health Practitioner Ombudsman	<p>If you are unhappy with the way your complaint about AHPRA is dealt with, you can contact the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman.</p>
Additional information you need to know	<p>More information regarding the review process is available here.</p>

Step 9: Overlapping or Related Jurisdiction to the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	<p>The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) can handle complaints about the way personal information has been handled by Australian Government agencies and some private organisations. The OAIC can also review freedom of information decisions that are made by Australian Government agencies and ministers.</p> <p>There are also State Government privacy and information complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.</p>
National - Aged care	<p>All complaints or concerns about aged care services can also be directed to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.</p>
State and territory equivalents	<p>Each state and territory in Australia has an equivalent to the AHPRA. Accordingly, if your query relates to government agencies in a specific state, please contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria - Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New South Wales – Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) • Queensland – Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) • Northern Territory – Health And Community Services Complaints Commission (HCSCC) • Western Australia – Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) • South Australia – Health And Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) • Tasmania – Health Complaints Commissioner • Australian Capital Territory – Health Services Commissioner
National Health Practitioner Ombudsman (NHPO)	The NHPO champions fairness by resolving complaints, identifying opportunities for systemic improvement, and engaging with the community to improve the regulation of Australia's registered health practitioners.
Courts and Tribunals	Unlike AHPRA courts and tribunals can make binding and enforceable determinations. You may want to seek legal advice about the option of pursuing your complaint at court if it relates to: compensation (including workers compensation claims), development application decisions, orders made by local councils, decisions, fines and orders of regulators and licensing authorities and disputes over expert assessments.

Need help?

Organisations that can help you make your complaint, provide support or advocacy or give you more information

Organisation	Contact Details	How they can help
AHPRA	Website: https://www.ahpra.gov.au/ Phone: 1300 419 495 (Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm (local time)) Online enquiry: Available here	You can contact AHPRA directly if you have any further questions or need assistance with your complaint.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: www.tisnational.gov.au Telephone: 131 450	Provides interpreting and translation services for people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: www.accesshub.gov.au	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.

Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
How to make a complaint	Guidance from AHPRA on how to make a complaint
Law Society: Know Your Rights	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.
Call It Out	Online register for racism/discrimination experienced or witnessed towards First Nations Australians. Not an official complaints body.