

educator news nov 2022

Update on new training package

As yet another challenging year draws to a close, the most hotly anticipated issue remains the publication of the new health training package qualifications and skill sets.

You may recall that AMT wrote to the Skills Minister, Hon Brendan O'Connor, on September 1 to emphasise the impacts of the significant delay in publishing the new qualifications, and to ascertain whether there was any way the industry could cooperate to expedite their publication. AMT received a response dated 25 October promising a resolution "in the very near future".

On 26 October, Myotherapy Association Australia, Massage and Myotherapy Australia, Australian Natural Therapists Association and AMT signed a joint communication to the AISC secretariat and directors positing a number of proposed solutions to the backlog that is causing the delay. Our thanks to the CMM and training providers who contributed to drafting this communication.

We received the following response in early November:

Thank you for your joint letter proposing a solution to address the backlog of training products caused by the delay in finalising CHC Release 7.0.

I understand that Minister O'Connor wrote to Ms Barnett last week to advise that the finalisation of the care qualifications is a high priority. Skills Ministers recently brought together an industry reference group to address stakeholder concerns and our Minister has now sought final endorsement from his State and Territory counterparts. Following that endorsement, the Skills Service Organisation is prepared and ready to address the backlog of training products as soon as possible.

We also appreciate the offer to work with the AISC and the time taken to consider options to address the backlog. We'll let you know if further delays arise and can work through this process. But a resolution to this long-running issue should now be imminent.

We are keeping a close eye on announcements from the AISC.

Health fund provider criteria

The impending release of the new qualifications and skill sets provides a solid platform to reopen dialogue with the private health funds regarding provider recognition criteria for remedial massage therapists. AMT has started engaging with the health funds on this front. At this stage, the dialogue has largely been on an informal basis given the qualification publication delay. However, we've had positive conversations with a number of major funds and we feel optimistic about the potential to streamline the criteria, bringing it back into line with national competency standards. We also think that the new skill sets may provide a pathway for therapists with older and grandfathered qualifications to regain provider status. We will obviously keep you posted on our progress.



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Research discussion groups

As part of AMT's recent conference month events, we hosted a small group discussion session on the seminal Tiffany Fields paper "Massage Therapy Effects". The interactive online session was wildly successful, exceeding all expectations for a fun and engaging evening! In fact, it was so successful that we scheduled a second discussion group event for 30 November and have had to close registrations early due to the size of the demand. We received 60 registrations in the first hour after posting the event.

This points to an exciting level of engagement with massage therapy research and a desire to learn how to better appraise the literature. It augurs well for when the new Diploma includes 'Research and apply evidence to practice' in the core of the qualification.