



Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

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Submission to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Consultation on the Definition of Cultural Safety

May 2019

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College) is the peak body for emergency medicine and has a vital interest in ensuring the highest standards of emergency medical care for all patients. ACEM is responsible for the training and ongoing education of emergency physicians and the advancement of professional standards in emergency medicine in Australia and New Zealand.

ACEM welcomes a single definition of cultural safety developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The definition proposed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is useful as it is specific to the First Nations Peoples of Australia, and encapsulates the essential element that cultural safety can only be determined by those who are receiving the care, not by the person or institution delivering the care.

ACEM will review its current policies, standards and other education material to ensure that the term cultural safety is used appropriately and consistently once the definition is endorsed.

ACEM is committed to improving the care and conditions for all culturally and linguistically diverse people who present to and work in emergency departments in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. ACEM chose to adopt the term “cultural competency” in 2013 to reflect terminology used by the Australian Medical Council at that time. In 2018, ACEM took the step to make cultural competency training a mandated part of Continuing Professional Development for Fellows. ACEM’s health equity strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is articulated through our Reconciliation Action Plan, established in 2017 and in the process of being refreshed for the next two years.

AHPRA may be aware that cultural safety was first developed in Aotearoa New Zealand by Irihapeti Ramsden (*Ngai Tahupōtiki* and *Rangitane*), with the publication of *Kawa Whakaruruhau - Cultural Safety in Nursing Education* in 1988. Cultural safety has been incorporated in the New Zealand nursing and midwifery curriculum since 1992.

As a bi-national medical college, working across Australia and New Zealand, ACEM acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand, and is committed to equitable care for Māori through our strategy, *Manaaki Mana: Excellence in Emergency Care for Māori*. ACEM encourages AHPRA to acknowledge the ground breaking work of Irihipati Ramsden and the Māori nursing community once the definition for First Nations Australians is endorsed and promoted.

The introduction of the proposed definition for cultural safety will allow ACEM to further articulate the need for emergency physicians working in Australia to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their individual work practice, and for inclusion in ACEM Accreditation Standards for Australian emergency departments. ACEM will also need to define a separate term for the knowledge, skills

and attitudes necessary to provide optimal care for other culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and would welcome the development of further standard definitions for health organisations in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback to this consultation. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the ACEM Policy Manager, Helena Maher (t: (03) 9320 0444, e: helena.maher@acem.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



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President



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