



## Re: Expert Advisory Group on Discrimination – Update

Dear members and trainees,

It has been just over a week since the report of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Discrimination was received by the ACEM Board, shared with the ACEM community and released publicly on the [ACEM website](#). Hopefully you have had time to review and digest the findings of the report.

The release of the report has received media attention, and the College has received feedback directly from members and trainees. The media coverage and feedback have related to the EAG process and findings. I am writing to you to acknowledge the feedback and address the key themes.

The report found no evidence of discrimination in the outcome of the 2016.2 Fellowship Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), but identified many areas requiring College attention.

We have already made substantial changes in many of the areas identified for action and will continue to address the very real concerns that have been raised. We recognise that some candidates have been deeply affected by their experience and apologise for the adverse impact it has had on their lives.

We also recognise that others within the broader College community have been impacted by the EAG Report and process, and regret any offence or discomfort any Fellows or trainees have experienced during this difficult process. The interim report by the EAG, received and considered by the Board in June, was exactly that- a preliminary finding formed on the basis of the information available to the EAG at that time. It raised questions that the EAG intended to explore, but acknowledged that additional independent and expert information was needed, at the same time as submissions continued to be received.

I thank all Fellows and trainees who contributed to the process of the EAG, both before the release of the interim report, and in response to it. I firmly believe that the value of the EAG process, and the gain in addressing issues raised, has been increased by individuals coming forward and presenting their views on the College's processes.

While the EAG's preliminary position questioned whether there was contribution through unconscious examiner bias, subsequent statistical analysis commissioned by the EAG found "no statistical evidence to establish that racial bias and discrimination resulted in the significant disparity of outcomes as alleged in the complaint". As such, the EAG did not support the complainant's request for remedy that a statistical modification of the 2016.2 results be undertaken.

ACEM stands by the integrity of the EAG process. ACEM is confident the EAG investigation was robust, thorough and independent. The EAG was chaired by Dr Helen Szoke, (former Victorian Equal Opportunity and former Human Rights Commissioner and federal Race Discrimination Commissioner with the Australian Human Rights Commission). The Deputy Chair was Professor Ron Paterson, (former New Zealand Health and Disability Commissioner and New Zealand Parliamentary Ombudsman).

Other members included:

- Professor Kichu Nair AM, Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean of Continuing Medical Education at the University of Newcastle, and Chair of the Workplace Based Assessment Committee at the Australian Medical Council.
- The inclusion of two FACEM Training Program trainees was appropriate to ensure that a trainee perspective was considered given the allegations the EAG investigated related directly to trainees.
- A recently qualified ACEM Fellow who qualified for election to Fellowship following the passing of a Fellowship Clinical Examination (OSCE) held since the beginning of 2015, and whose primary medical education was obtained in a country other than Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada or the USA.
- Two members of the current ACEM Board which allowed the EAG to be provided with comprehensive information about the College and its role, policies and processes as well as hear first-hand the experience of trainees.

The EAG received submissions, both written and oral, from a range of stakeholders, including current and former trainees, College Fellows, Directors of Emergency Medicine Training (i.e. supervisors), current and former examiners, members of the Examinations Subcommittee, and representatives of the complainants. Anonymous submissions were also made directly to the independent members of the EAG.

The EAG also commissioned independent statistical and psychometric analysis and a literature review as part of its investigation.

To do justice to the report, the Board will be carefully considering the EAG's findings and recommendations, and has committed to developing and publishing a comprehensive Action Plan by February 2018. This Action Plan will be integrated with identified actions arising out of separate work being undertaken by the College in relation to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment within the field of Emergency Medicine.

The Board recognises the significance of the work ahead of us. We are committed to a transparent and accountable process. Members, trainees and other stakeholders are welcome to continue to provide feedback to the College by emailing [feedback@acem.org.au](mailto:feedback@acem.org.au)

Yours sincerely



Professor Tony Lawler  
**President**  
**Australasian College for Emergency Medicine**