

Information Sheet

Changes to Sexual Misconduct Regulations: What Medical Practitioners Need to Know and Where to Find Support

*Changes apply to all registered health professions regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. **This information sheet has been compiled for medical practitioners.***

In [April 2026](#), significant legislative changes came into effect across Australia regarding how findings of sexual misconduct by health practitioners are managed and published. These changes, introduced under amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, reflect a clear regulatory intention: **strengthening community safety, increasing transparency, and restoring trust in healthcare environments.**

Why the Changes Are Occurring

[Ahpra and National Boards](#) have reinforced their position that **all sexual misconduct is serious** because it undermines safety, violates trust, and damages public confidence in the profession. The new legislation reflects the expectation that regulatory bodies respond strongly and transparently to sexual misconduct.

The core shift brought by these amendments is the **requirement for additional information about sexual misconduct to be permanently published on the National Register**. This aims to ensure people have clear, accessible information when making decisions about whom they choose for their health care. A Short Guide is available to explain key points: [Sexual Misconduct and the National Law Short Guide - Ahpra](#)

What Will Be Published and When

Under the new provisions, if a tribunal has found a health practitioner engaged in **professional misconduct**, and sexual misconduct was a basis for that finding, the National Board must publish:

- A statement that the practitioner engaged in sexual misconduct
- Any sanctions imposed (e.g., reprimand, conditions, suspension, cancellation)
- A link to the tribunal decision, where available

If a medical practitioner's registration has been cancelled, the register will also show:

- Whether they are disqualified from applying for registration
- The length of any disqualification
- Whether they are prohibited from providing health services or using particular titles

These additions will appear no earlier than 28 days after the practitioner is notified of the Board's final decision at the conclusion of a show cause process.

Who Will This Apply To?

The changes apply across all regulated health professions and operate retrospectively. This means that tribunal decisions made as far back as 1 July 2010 may be captured.

Medical practitioners who may be affected by the new law will be contacted directly by Ahpra before receiving any formal notification.

Affected medical practitioners will be invited to make a submission as part of the process and will have 28 days to respond. This period may be extended in some circumstances. Practitioners will be advised of the final decision, and the information will be published to the register 28 days later.

Exceptions to Publication

Not all findings will result in published information. Additional information will **not** be published when:

- Publication would pose a **serious risk to the health or safety** of the practitioner, their family, or an associate

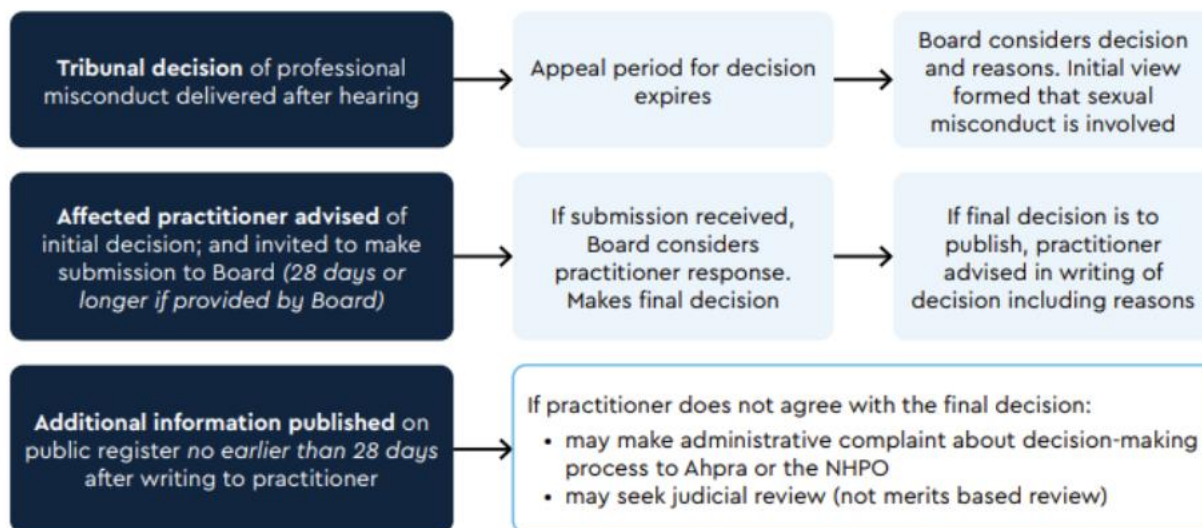
- A tribunal decision is overturned, modified, or stayed on appeal
- Publication would breach a court or tribunal order
- The information relates to conditions imposed due to impairment and would breach privacy

These safeguards ensure that transparency is balanced with fairness, safety, and respect for practitioner wellbeing.

Understanding the Decision-Making Process

Boards will rely solely on tribunal decisions and reasons. They will not reinvestigate the allegations.

For further information on the decision making process see Section 7 [Guidance, Sexual Misconduct and the National Law](#), a summary is included below.



Source: 7.1 Decision-making summary diagram, Ahpra Guidance, December 2025

Supporting Practitioners Through Change

For some practitioners and their families and colleagues, these changes may bring very significant emotional, psychological, or professional distress.

It is important that practitioners know help is available, confidential, and accessible.

Where Medical Practitioners Can Find Support

Your own GP

It is important to talk to a doctor if you feel you are struggling with your mental health. Your GP will also be able to connect you through to other support services.

Doctors Health Services

Doctors Health Services Pty Ltd (Drs4Drs) is a national not-for-profit organisation providing independent, confidential support to doctors and medical students. Through a coordinated network of State and Territory-based providers, Drs4Drs connects individuals to appropriate local and national support services. Access is available 24/7 via the national support line (1300 374 377) or www.drs4drs.com.au

State and Territory Doctors' Health Services

State and Territory Doctors' Health Services provide local, doctor-led and confidential support. These services understand the unique professional and personal pressures experienced by doctors and medical students, including those associated with regulatory or legal processes. To find contact details for services in your area, please visit: <https://www.drs4drs.com.au/getting-help#doctors-health-services>

Professional Insurers and Defence Organisations

Practitioners who receive a notification, or believe they may be affected, are strongly encouraged to seek advice early from their:

- Medical defence organisation
- Legal advisers

Australian Medical Association

Members may reach out to seek advice.

These organisations can help medical practitioners understand their rights, obligations, and options.

Other Sources of Support

Medical practitioners may also find support by reaching out to:

- trusted colleagues or mentors
- family and friends
- cultural, spiritual, or community advisors
- mental health practitioners
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

A Message for the Medical Profession

These reforms mark a significant cultural and regulatory shift. They are designed to improve public safety and confidence, but they also acknowledge that real people - practitioners, families, colleagues - may be affected by the process.

If you are concerned about how these changes may impact you or someone you work with, **you do not need to navigate this alone**. Support is available, confidential, and encouraged.

Reaching out early, even just to talk, can make a profound difference.

Additional helplines include:

- **1800RESPECT** – sexual assault, domestic and family violence support
- **Lifeline (13 11 14)** – 24/7 crisis support
- **13YARN** – crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

April 2026