



Update to the Profession - October 2012

Dear Colleagues,

The Hypnotherapy Council of Australia (HCA) and its subcommittees continue to meet regularly, building the foundations of HCA. This update addresses several important issues.

We are about to take another foundational step. The "Handbook of Ethical Practice" has been drafted by the Ethics subcommittee, and has also had input from the delegates who were at the recent August Annual General Meeting (AGM). This ethical handbook also contains Media and Marketing Guidelines, and reference to relevant Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) legislation.

Implementation of HCA policy requires that certain procedures as outlined by the HCA Constitution be followed. Once the subcommittees have completed deliberations on a policy recommendation, it is submitted to the National Board. If 85% of the National Board agrees with the recommended policy, then a Special General Meeting (SGM) of delegates is called, and a copy of the policy and meeting details are sent to all the HCA members' delegates and relevant personnel.

The proposed Handbook of Ethical Practice has now been passed by the National Board, and so proceeds to a SGM.

This SGM will enable the delegates to vote on the proposed Handbook of Ethical Practice, putting another cornerstone into the HCA foundations. The SGM is via Skype, Sunday 25 November. The details have already been sent to all HCA delegates and their relevant personnel in the last week, *so if you do not have yours, please contact me immediately.*

The National Board would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this document.

We have noticed however, during the recent annual renewal process, that a number of entities and delegates have changed their contact details without previously notifying us. Please make sure you keep HCA updated *when those changes occur* or you may miss important information.

The HCA President and Vice President will be in Western Australia on 18 November to meet with hypnotherapy practitioners from PHWA and the WA Branch of AHA. This is an important opportunity for practitioners, so please contact one of the associations as soon as possible if you need further details.

On another matter, there have been disturbing rumours flying around the profession along the lines of "HCA will accept any organisation as a member, they just want to build numbers", "If we are not trained by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) which is part of the Government Australian Qualifications Framework, we will not be able to practise in 2 years time", "Only RTOs are legitimate training organisations", and "If I am not trained by an RTO, I will not be able to get any Health Funds rebates for my clients".

Hmmm. The National Board thinks it is time to step in and clarify these misunderstandings, and put these matters to rest as they are unfair to everyone concerned.

Firstly, HCA has criteria for membership as outlined in the Constitution, the criteria that was accepted by the profession at the national meeting in 2010. Any entity applying must meet those criteria. In addition, since the adoption of the Minimum Standards of Training and Education in May 2012, these also form part of the criteria for membership, as will the ethical standards once they have been passed by our members. Although the aim of HCA is to be inclusive to unite our profession, this is certainly not being done as a "we take anyone" policy! All applications are assessed by several members of the Board against the current criteria, and must meet, or better, that criteria before membership is accepted. If they do not meet the criteria, they are not accepted.

Secondly, there is *no* legislation currently being drafted in Australia to restrict the practice of Hypnosis or Hypnotherapy to only those who are trained by an RTO, or any particular college, or type of training. Nor is there

any legislation being developed to restrict the teaching of Hypnosis or Hypnotherapy to only RTOs or a particular college or type of training. In addition, the rumours of such changes in the UK cannot be substantiated. All associations have the right to set their entry requirements and membership levels as they see fit, but the introduction of Government legislation is a very different matter! Introducing legislation takes a long time, requires consultation with the people it affects, and usually any legislation of that type contains a grandfather clause. It is also worth remembering that the majority of hypnotherapy training schools in this country are Non-RTOs, and we believe the majority of hypnotherapy practitioners in Australia have been trained by Non-RTOs, so if there was such a pending move, you can be sure that your associations, and the HCA, will be shouting it from the roof tops, rather than it being passed around by rumour.

These days, unlike in the 1960's, the Australian Government at State and Federal levels has direct contact with the hypnotherapy profession and its organisations, and is in touch with HCA and our associations as they discuss potential legislative matters. And although we are regularly making submissions on such enquiries, none of them are about restricting the practice of hypnosis to certain types of training. Other professions have different sets of circumstances, and the hypnotherapy profession has made the wise move to become voluntarily self-regulating, and put its own standards in place. One of the reasons for HCA's existence and uniting the profession is so that if ever such a move is proposed, we will hear about it, and will deal with it as an organised profession.

Thirdly, schools, be they RTOs or Non-RTOs, are not responsible for organising whether or not you get provider numbers from Private Health Insurers. It is the associations that have to negotiate with the Health Funds as to the level of training/experience that is required for rebates to be allowed. Simplest way to answer this rumour is, I was not trained by an RTO, and I have provider numbers with many of the Health Funds, as do many of the practitioners in the association I personally belong to who are also Non-RTO trained. (Note that some Health Funds do not rebate hypnotherapy at all, and some also only rebate it where it is provided by a registered psychologist. The HCA recently made submission to the ACCC on this inequity).

Please understand, these comments here are not directed in any way against RTOs themselves, some of our members are RTOs, but against the rumours that are causing repeated distress to our practitioners, and in some cases, expectations of what is actually unnecessary expense. Moreover, these rumours are unfair to the reputations of both the RTOs and the Non-RTOs. This matter has been brought to the attention of our associations and the Board on several occasions, and although it has been dealt with on a case-by-case basis until now, it was time for HCA to make a wider statement in the hopes of putting these rumours to rest. Therefore, if you do hear any more of these rumours, we would ask that you direct the full details of where they are originating from to the National Board in a proper signed statement so we may follow them up and cease this misinformation or misunderstanding that is causing unnecessary fear and distress. Thank you.

HCA is helping the hypnotherapy profession unite and become self regulating so that we do stand as a profession in our own right, and can show we have standards and processes in place for the profession. So if your organisation is not yet a member of HCA, and would like to join, please contact us to discuss how this may be achieved.

If you would like to contact the National Board about these or other matters, please feel free to do so via secretary@hypnotherapycouncilofaustralia.com or president@hypnotherapycouncilofaustralia.com.

Regards,
Margaret Kelly
President
Hypnotherapy Council of Australia

The HCA Mission:

'The Hypnotherapy Council of Australia (HCA) is the national peak body for Clinical Hypnotherapy in Australia. The HCA provides a cohesive identity for the diversity of hypnotherapy methodologies and promotes their professional and ethical practice for the benefit of the community.'