

**Review Implementation Committee**  
***Divisions of General Practice: Future Directions***  
**Funding Agreement Working Group**

**Communiqué – Meeting of 19 April 2005**

The Review Implementation Committee Funding Agreement Working Group (FAWG) was established to progress the development of the Exposure Draft Funding Agreement for the Divisions of General Practice.

Members of FAWG met in Canberra on Tuesday 19 April 2005 to discuss the Exposure Draft Funding Agreement in what was a very productive and positive meeting.

The Chair opened the meeting by saying that the guiding principles for the Working Group's deliberations should be that the Funding Agreement must be reasonable and comply with the relevant Acts and legislations and that the meeting should be solution focussed.

***Funding Agreement***

The FAWG discussed at length the concerns of Divisions and the impact of the Exposure Draft Agreement in its current form on the business operations and autonomy of Divisions in their delivery of health services to their communities.

FAWG members were reassured of the commitment by the Department to respond to the concerns of Divisions where possible.

To further refine the Exposure Draft Agreement, FAWG members reviewed the comments received from Divisions on the Agreement that were provided to the State and Territory Offices and to ADGP through State Based Organisations. All participants addressed the process positively.

Essentially both network and Department review processes of material sent from the network, identified similar issues. Given that many specific clauses and definitions had revisions proposed or adopted, the general themes of review are provided below.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Direction</b>
General	The Department acknowledges that both the network members and the Department will need guidance documents and templates on the new Funding Agreement (and associated components of the National Quality and Performance System). This documentation will form the basis of a training package for State and Territory Offices to foster consistent and transparent engagement between the Department and individual members.
Timeframes	The Department recognises that in stipulating times for responses from Divisions on specific issues that it needs to provide advice regarding timeframes for DoHA responses. These will be detailed in guidance documents.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Direction</b>
Definitions/ references	Revisions to definitions and simplification via cross referencing will clarify areas such as “related parties”, “sub-contractors” “conflict of interest”. Consistent terminology will be used throughout the Funding Agreement.
Escalation Strategy	An escalation strategy will be developed which will provide for a transparent hierarchy of actions to resolve issues raised by either party in a timely way to avoid problems arising.
Funding for Programs	The Department will clarify and amend where possible those Clauses that have implications on funding, for example uncommitted and unspent funds and withholding of funds.

While there remains issues that cannot be resolved immediately, and a number that needed to take into account the Department’s responsibility and accountability under Acts and legislation, FAWG members were able to reach agreement in a practical and balanced way on a majority of the outstanding issues and this will form the basis of the next version.

The Department is committed to working collaboratively with Divisions to develop an agreement that meets as far as possible the requirements and accountability of both parties. The Committee is confident that Divisions can be more reassured in the robustness of the new Agreement.

### ***Supporting Initiatives***

The Department reconfirmed its’ commitment for providing information to Divisions on the Divisions responsibilities under the funding arrangements in a consistent and uniform manner. The FAWG discussed at length important initiatives being developed by the Department to complement the new Funding Agreement. FAWG acknowledges the concern raised by a number of Divisions in regards to needing a consistent skill base for Department staff who manage the funding arrangements for Divisions. In response, the Program Guidelines, proposed templates for analysis and feedback for deliverables and Training Modules for DoHA staff are being designed to ensure that there is a clear and consistent framework for both the Department and the Divisions to operate in.

Additionally, work will commence shortly on the development of a “Deliverables Template” that will provide a clear checklist for the reporting, analysis and feedback requirements of Divisions.

### ***Next Steps***

The Working Group noted the next meeting of FAWG is scheduled for 4 May 2005 and the Department has committed to seeking further legal advice and clarification, and where appropriate, redrafting of a number of the clauses in the Agreement that the Divisions network has signalled to the Department as being of major concern.

The next FAWG meeting is scheduled to be a teleconference on Wednesday 4 May.

A redraft of the Funding Agreement and Divisions of General Practice Program schedules will be available to FAWG members for discussion at the next meeting.

***Members of FAWG***

<i>Ms Lisa McGlynn (Chair)</i>	Assistant Secretary, Budget and Performance Branch, Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)
<i>Sharon Prendergast</i>	Director, GP Divisions Management Section, DoHA
<i>Roz Lucas</i>	Director, PCD Contract Management Advisory Unit, DoHA
<i>Darryl Butler</i>	Northern Territory State Office, DoHA
<i>Marilyn Mariano</i>	South Australia State Office, DoHA (for Kleo Pope)
<i>Carolyn Searle</i>	EO, North West Melbourne Division
<i>Liesel Wett</i>	Deputy CEO, Australian Divisions of General Practice
<i>Ian Landreth</i>	CEO, Sunshine Coast Division
<i>Bill Newton</i>	CEO, General Practice Divisions Victoria
<i>Lynette Fergusson</i>	Manager, General Practice Systems Services Team, Queensland Divisions of General Practice
<i>Sarah Male</i>	CEO, Tasmanian General Practice Divisions Ltd

**Secretariat**

<i>Ann Frizzell</i>	GP Divisions Management Section, DoHA
<i>Tracey McMahon</i>	GP Divisions Management Section, DoHA