

September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Australian Paramedics Association (NSW) (APA (NSW)) is a registered trade union representing the paramedics employed by NSW Ambulance. We would like to thank the Committee for giving us the opportunity to reply as well as the short extension of time on our submission.

**Question 1:**

*Is 60 days an appropriate timeframe for assessing complaints?*

This is an appropriate timeframe as a final deadline, although it would be preferable for this to be deadline rather than the general timeframe for all assessments.

*In your experience, has the HCCC consistently assessed complaints within its 60-day timeframe?*

We have had multiples experiences where the assessment of complaint of one of our members significantly exceeded the 60 day timeframe. Our members are frequently not given the opportunity to respond until after the 60 day timeframe has long since lapsed. This is an issue particularly because human memory degrades significantly as time goes on. This means our members' could be unduly prejudiced under the circumstances by not being able to adequately respond to the complaints put forward to them.

**Question 2:**

*Is 60 days an appropriate timeframe for completing reviews of assessment decisions?*

See answer to Question 1.

*In your experience, has the HCCC consistently completed reviews of assessment decisions within its 60-day timeframe?*

We have no recent examples of reviews of assessment decisions related to our members. This may be because it is not necessarily publicised among our membership that a review for a decision is possible. However, we generally find decisions of the HCCC just and fair under the circumstances.

**Question 3:**

*Is 12 months an appropriate timeframe for completing of investigations?*

With the understanding that these are the only the most serious of investigations, there can be some flexibility for a long timeframe. However, APA (NSW) believes that communication is key. If an investigation is going to potentially take that long, it ought to be very clearly and, more importantly, consistently communicated to our members. Letting people know that their case is still under review is better than simply telling them nothing at all.

*In your experience, has the HCCC consistently completed investigations within its 12-month timeframe?*

We have a couple of examples where this was exceeded, but the other investigations were completed in this timeframe.

**Question 4:**

These indicators seem appropriate under the circumstances.

**Question 5:**

This question is outside the scope of our organisation.

**Question 6:**

I think there is a deep misunderstanding on what the Commission actually does. On even the most basic terms, our members confuse the Commission for the Paramedicine Council or the Industrial Relations Commission. Putting that aside, the location of substantial information provided about the HCCC's processes and procedures is not easily accessible on the HCCC's website. While some factsheets are provided to those being investigated, they tend to be quite vague about what actually happens at the HCCC and the systems behind it.

**Question 7:**

This question is outside the scope of our organisation.