

8 November 2002



Ms Kate Pearson  
Productivity Commission  
Level 28  
35 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Ms Pearson

**RE: AGPAL Accreditation**

Further to recent discussions, AGPAL wishes to provide the following information on the *AGPAL Accreditation* process.

**OVERVIEW**

Accreditation is a way of assessing and recognising the quality of a general practice against professionally developed and trialed standards. The RACGP, as the arbiter of the standards, devised them to be focused on processes and operations of practices, whilst the individual qualifications and continuing education of the doctors remains the focus of the RACGP QA&CPD program.

The vast majority of practices find their participation in *AGPAL Accreditation* provides an opportunity to review the way in which they operate and function and whether there are different, and better ways, of refining these operations.

**BENEFITS**

For practices that decide to go through *AGPAL Accreditation*, we offer a range of benefits, including:

- Professional autonomy and accountability for GPs by ensuring the *AGPAL Accreditation* process is owned and led by the profession;
- A practice system driven by efficiencies, minimal risk and geared towards best practice;
- Access to the Commonwealth's Practice Incentives Payments (PIP);
- A total of 20 RACGP CPD points (Group 2);
- Promoting general practice in a competitive primary care market.

AGPAL is also launching a Registry of Resources (ROR), which will directly link general practices to a range of services, products and resources at a national, state and local level. There will be many discounts and incentives available to those practices that are AGPAL Accredited, although the facility will be available to all practices in the country. ROR will enable practices to access their report with recommendations online. It will also be linked to relevant resources, services and providers.

**COSTS**

AGPAL is a not for profit organisation owned and run by the general practice profession. This ensures the future of *AGPAL Accreditation* remains in the hands of general practice and there is equity of access for all GPs in the country. Therefore, the cost of accreditation has been designed to be equitable for every GP in Australia, regardless of the practice size or the geographical location.

The costing model is thus structured with the highest regard for these important considerations. By far the greatest cost within this model is to bring two surveyors to the practice to conduct the *AGPAL Accreditation* visit. Surveyors are peers who are paid at professional rates when they assess a practice. This cost is a professional cost linked to the number of full time equivalency working in a general practice.



#### Accreditation Costs – 1<sup>st</sup> cycle

Surveyor Team: GP/NGP \$1,100 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

Surveyor Team: GP/GP \$1,200 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

#### Accreditation costs – 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle

The reaccreditation process is designed differently and there is more emphasis on how a practice maintains the standards with a section of the self assessment workbook which is returnable.

#### Return of Maintenance Indicators

Surveyor Team: GP/NGP \$1,095 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

Surveyor Team: GP/GP \$1,295 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

#### Non-Return of Maintenance Indicators

Surveyor Team: GP/NGP \$1,295 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

Surveyor Team: GP/GP \$1,495 + GST per full time equivalent (FTE)

#### CYCLE

The accreditation cycle is a three-year cycle, which commences once a practice achieves accreditation. Due to the diversity of each general practice situation, it is impossible to gauge the average costs associated with accreditation. Some practices may have had systems and operations in place when applying for accreditation whilst other practices are required to implement changes.

Currently AGPAL has awarded accreditation to over 4400. With the second round of the accreditation cycle in progress, AGPAL has reassessed 326 practices, which have achieved and maintained *AGPAL Accreditation*.

To gather information on the accreditation process, practices are given an evaluation form to complete. The following comments have been provided by practices that have been through the *AGPAL Accreditation* process:

*“Feedback was important to us. Showed us our strengths and weaknesses. Survey team were friendly and approachable. It wasn’t as grueling as I thought it would be.”*

*“We enjoyed our reaccreditation visit. All recommendations were presented in a clear, concise manner with help offered as to where the necessary resources could be found. Surveyors were thorough, but friendly and were able to put the staff at ease while asking questions. Surveyors kept to schedule which allowed for minimal disruption to our appointment system”*

*“Conducted very unobtrusively and with good humour. No disruption to patient service”*

By far the greatest feedback AGPAL receives is that the reaccreditation process was less stressful, easier, quicker, more efficient and proceeded smoothly.

#### FUTURE

In summary, practices are responding with enthusiasm to the *AGPAL Accreditation* process and we look forward to supporting the general practice profession in achieving accreditation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me as I would be happy to clarify any of the issues discussed above.

Yours sincerely

**DAVID WRIGHT**  
General Manager