



## Consultation Paper

### Paramedicine: Draft Clinical Practice Framework for Australasia

#### Why are we consulting?

The Australasian College of Paramedicine (the College) is inviting feedback on the Paramedicine: Draft Clinical Practice Framework for Australasia (the Framework). Feedback collected through the consultation process will be used to support the College in defining the clinical practice opportunities for paramedics in the future. This work will flow into a complete career framework for paramedicine that covers clinical practice, education, research, and leadership and management, and these will be addressed in separate consultations.

#### Providing feedback

The College has opened this consultation to gather wider feedback on the clinical practice levels the profession anticipates in future years. This framework specifically seeks to capture the most beneficial future structure for the clinical arm of the profession. The College will review all feedback received and progress necessary recommendations.

Data gathered through the consultation will be stored in accordance with the [College's Privacy Policy](#).

You can provide your comments by completing a short [survey](#).

**Submissions close at 5pm AEST, Sunday 9 April.**

#### Publication of submissions

The College reserves the right to publish submissions to inform members and stakeholders, and to encourage discussion.

Published submissions will include the names of the individuals and/or the organisations that made the submission unless confidentiality is requested. Please advise us if you do not want your submission published.

The College will not publish submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments, or which are deemed outside the scope of the subject of the consultation.

To request that your submission not be published, please email [policy@paramedics.org](mailto:policy@paramedics.org)

#### Overview/Background

With the advent of paramedic registration in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been growing opportunities to utilise paramedics in other areas of the health system.

It's important that the profession comes together to consider future opportunities for paramedics and chart the future direction of the profession in the next decade. The knowledge, education and

capabilities of paramedics provide ample scope for broadening paramedic practice and capitalising on the many opportunities that exist for the profession to continue to grow; however, challenges and barriers to paramedics realising their full potential within the health system remain.

In 2014 in the UK, a [Paramedic Career Framework](#) was developed and is now in its fourth edition. This framework has played a key role in clarifying the career opportunities available to UK paramedics across the health system and helped define - for paramedics and stakeholders - the roles paramedics are able to undertake.

It's an opportune time to establish a career framework for paramedicine in Australasia. Up to now, career pathways for paramedics have been largely defined – and limited – by their role in emergency services; however, the emerging opportunities for paramedics to meet broader needs within the health system requires the profession as a whole to come together to determine a professional framework that captures the full breadth of paramedic practice and acknowledges the many contributions paramedics are making, and will continue to make, across the health sector in many different capacities.

### Discussion: Draft Clinical Practice Framework for Australasia

From June to September 2022, the College, in consultation with an advisory group of paramedics, reviewed the UK Paramedic Career Framework and began collating a clinical practice framework for paramedics. This saw a review of dozens of resources from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, the UK and other countries on qualification levels, capabilities, and practice standards for entry-level clinicians through to advanced and consultant-level practitioners.

The UK framework is highly regarded and, in many ways, matches both the practice context and educational framework in Australasia. With Australasia already having matching levels at Level 1 – Paramedic and Level 2 – Specialist Paramedic, this offers an appropriate starting point for the draft Clinical Practice Framework for paramedicine in the region.

#### UK Clinical Practice Career Framework

| Level | Title                       | Education                             | Descriptors  |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1     | <b>Paramedic</b>            | BSc (Hons)<br>FHEQ* – 6<br>SCQF* – 10 | Autonomous practitioner exposed to undifferentiated and unpredictable caseloads, a wide range of clinical assessments, diagnostic and treatment activities |
| 2     | <b>Specialist Paramedic</b> | PGDip<br>FHEQ – 7<br>SCQF - 11        | Enhanced knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, competence and judgement in area of specialisation  |
| 3     | <b>Advanced Paramedic</b>   | MSc<br>FHEQ – 7<br>SCQF – 11          | Expert knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, competence and judgement in area of advanced practice   |
| 4     | <b>Consultant Paramedic</b> | Doctorate<br>FHEQ – 8<br>SCQF – 12    | Highly developed theoretical and practical knowledge over a wide range of clinical, scientific, technical and/or management functions                      |

\*FHEQ – Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

\*SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The Framework utilises a four-level model, with the view to developing a similar model for education, research, and leadership and management. The framework was discussed during a representative

forum at the Australasian College of Paramedicine International Conference 2022 in September and with other stakeholders in October. General support for the four-level model was evident, while further refinement was required for the definitions. The current iteration has incorporated the feedback received in 2022 and is ready for wider consideration and discussion.

As with all frameworks, there are always exceptions, such as someone transferring from another health profession who already has a health degree and may take less time to progress or someone transitioning into paramedicine via a postgraduate degree. The Framework is a structure to support paramedicine’s development and clarify career opportunities and requirements; its aim is not to cover every possibility and individual circumstance.

*Draft four-level clinical practice framework for Australasia*

| Level | Title                                |  | Education   | Descriptors  |
|-------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1     | Paramedic                            | Foundation<br>PGY1   | Bachelor degree in<br>Paramedicine or Health<br>Science (or equivalent)<br><br>AQF* / NZQF* level 7   | Registered health practitioner who<br>uses clinical knowledge, skill, and<br>judgement to confidently deliver<br>holistic, person-centred care |
|       |                                      | Intermediate<br>PGY2-3   |   |  |
|       |                                      | Advanced<br>PGY4+  |   |  |
| 2     | Specialist Paramedic<br>PGY5+        | Postgraduate Diploma in<br>area of clinical<br>specialisation (or<br>equivalent)<br><br>AQF / NZQF level 8           | Enhanced clinical knowledge and<br>skills, complex decision-making, and<br>judgement in area of clinical<br>specialisation                                  |  |
| 3     | Senior Specialist Paramedic<br>PGY8+ | Master’s degree in area of<br>specialisation<br><br>AQF / NZQF level 9   | Advanced clinical knowledge, high-<br>level complex decision-making skills,<br>advanced judgement in area of<br>clinical specialisation                     |  |
| 4     | Consultant Paramedic<br>PGY12+       | Doctorate<br><br>AQF / NZQF level 10<br><br>or multiple Master’s<br>qualifications (i.e. clinical<br>and leadership) | Expert knowledge, high-level<br>complex decision-making skills,<br>expert judgement, and leadership<br>across multiple practice contexts of<br>paramedicine |  |

\*AQF – Australian Qualifications Framework

\*NZQF – New Zealand Qualifications Framework

\*PGY – Postgraduate Years of Practice

Please see the full two-page [Draft Clinical Practice Framework Descriptors](#) for further detail to support your feedback. Once the clinical practice framework is completed, work will begin on incorporating the other practice domains of education, research, and leadership and management into the framework.

The College is investing to undertake the [Paramedicine Workforce Research](#) over the next three years, and this will further inform future iterations of the Australasian Paramedicine Career Framework.

A note about paramedic practitioners: There has been a recent announcement in Victoria about the introduction of paramedic practitioners. The College sees the roles announced as being at Level 3 – Senior Specialist Paramedic. Employers will determine the role titles they use for their specific context,

but we envision the profession determining the levels, qualifications, and broad capabilities that will help inform employers.

In relation to the name 'paramedic practitioner', the College is currently neutral on this term. We understand some in the profession support this role title while others do not. The main concern the College has is avoiding potential confusion among stakeholders and the community in drawing similarities with nurse practitioners - which is a level of practice recognised by registering bodies in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The College has used a tiered level structure that follows the medical model, with specialist, senior specialist and consultant levels, rather than a nursing model in which a nurse practitioner is considered the top tier.

## **Have your say: complete the online survey [here](#)**

The College has opened a consultation process inviting feedback from stakeholders to help further refine the Draft Clinical Practice Framework for Australasia.

Please read the consultation paper before completing this survey. It is estimated that the [online survey](#) will take 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will only be recorded once you complete the survey and press 'submit'. \*Indicates compulsory questions.

The consultation process will involve two phases:

1. An online survey where stakeholders can provide feedback on the Framework and help clarify areas for further improvement. This work is planned to be undertaken relatively quickly following the completion of the survey collection period.
2. Small group online forums to further clarify the framework and bring it to a final draft. (Your email address will be captured in the survey for correspondence.)

### *Further opportunity to contribute to this work*

It is important to note that underpinning the Framework, the College sees a matrix of capabilities to help define expectations at each level. Anyone with experience in writing capability statements for paramedicine and who has an interest in supporting the College work can submit an [EOI](#).

## **Appendices**

[Paramedicine: Draft Clinical Practice Framework Descriptors](#)

[Expression of interest: Clinical Practice Framework capabilities](#)