



Limited ACN 145 829 812

8 March 2015

Dear Member,

National Mediator Accreditation System (NMAS)

The Directors of the Mediator Standards Board are pleased to advise that the revised NMAS was approved at a meeting of the MSB on 11 February 2015 and will come into effect on 1 July 2015. The revised [NMAS](#) (a copy of which is attached) is available on the MSB website.

The revisions build on the excellent foundations of the initial *Approval* and *Practice Standards* which were published in 2008 and on feedback from members during various stages of the revision process. The Board greatly appreciates in particular, the feedback on the draft revised NMAS distributed to members on 15 August 2014. The Board has carefully considered all comments to arrive at the attached.

The revised NMAS represents a comprehensive revision of the *Approval* and *Practice Standards*, contextualising these in a broader document covering ancillary aspects of the NMAS. Key additions and changes are as follows:

- Part I outlines the purpose of the NMAS, its application, the role of mediators and the NMAS structure.
- Part II the Approval Standards have been amended in the following key respects:
 - The period within which the 38-hour training requirement can be completed has increased from 9 months to 24 months;
 - The experience qualified pathway for gaining accreditation has been modified and additional pathways for gaining accreditation have been introduced;
 - Accreditation and experience requirements for trainers, coaches and assessors have been added;
 - The number of CPD hours to be achieved/obtained in each two-year cycle has been slightly increased but the activities that can contribute to CPD have been broadened, and exceptions to completing the requirements have been restricted;
 - There is a new provision for mediators to apply for leave of absence and also to apply for reinstatement following leave of absence or lapsed or suspended accreditation;

- The MSB has been provided with the ability, in exceptional circumstances, to waive compliance with any provision of the Approval Standards, on application by an RMAB.
- In Part III, the Practice Standards have been amended to specify clearly the minimum practice and competency requirements for mediators, and also a requirement to inform participants about what they can expect of the mediation process and of the mediator. In addition, mediators must give participants information on how they can provide positive feedback or lodge a formal complaint in relation to services provided by them.
- In Part IV, more formal provision is made for the qualifications, functions and responsibilities of RMABs. The requirements relating to mutual recognition have been clarified. RMABs have a new express obligation to upload to the National Register the list of mediators accredited by that RMAB, and a requirement to notify the MSB of mediators who have been granted a period of leave of absence or have been suspended by an RMAB.
- Part V deals with the Register of Nationally Accredited Mediators.
- Part VI outlines the membership and responsibilities of the Mediator Standards Board.

In setting 1 July 2015 as the date from which the revised NMAS will come into effect, the Board has carefully considered the changes and is of the view that the majority of changes are either not substantive or are beneficial in nature. Whilst there are some additional obligations imposed, in the Board's view none of these require a lengthy lead-in period before they can be implemented.

The impact is likely to be greatest for mediators whose accreditation renewal becomes due on 1 July 2015 or shortly thereafter. Whilst the CPD requirement for mediators seeking renewal of their accreditation has increased by 5 hours, there is an expanded range of options available to meet that requirement before their re-accreditation falls due. If insurmountable and unexpected transitional impediments are encountered the Board will give favourable consideration to exercising its more explicit dispensation powers.

The Board looks forward to the revised NMAS making a positive contribution to the continued improvement of professional mediator standards in Australia, consistent with the development of mediation globally.

Yours sincerely,



Anna Lee Cribb

Chair
MSB