
MSB NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2020

This newsletter is circulated to our member organisations, current and former MSB Directors, and to NMAS trainers/coaches/assessors who have expressed an interest in receiving them. The newsletter is also [uploaded onto the MSB website](#).

We recommend that member organisations share this with their administrative and training teams. They are also welcome to include a link to this newsletter in their own communications with members.

ANNOUNCEMENT – NMAS REVIEW

The MSB are pleased to announce the appointment of Resolution Resources to the task of undertaking the NMAS review. Over the course of the coming months we will be working with Danielle Hutchinson and Emma-May Litchfield of Resolution Resources to ensure a thorough and collaborative review process. Resolution Resources bring independence, sound methodology, and impressive international experience to this important piece of work. They focus on meaningful and thorough engagement with stakeholders and they will be working with our members and their member mediators throughout the consultation stage of the review.

The review process represents an exciting opportunity for the Australian dispute resolution community. It is an opportunity to bring an evidence-base to the NMAS and to further pave the way for international leadership in mediator standards.

ENGAGING WITH THE NMAS COMMUNITY

While we may be unable to travel and have face-to-face meetings, 2020 has created opportunities to connect online more frequently with our members across Australia. We are grateful for such opportunities.

Online presentations and engagement opportunities have included:

- Presenting at the NMC mini conference on 26th July 2020
- Engaging with NMAS trainers, coaches and assessors at a MSB online outreach event on 10th August 2020
- Presenting at member organisation AGMs
- Attending member organisation chapter events for Q & A sessions
- Meetings with stakeholders and member organisations as the need arises

In addition to the above, the MSB Chair will be co-presenting with Resolution Resources on the topic of Standards at the **28th UIA World Forum of Mediation Centres Virtual Forum**, 3-4 September 2020. If you would like to learn more about this conference head to [this link](#).

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTAKE/PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE

Intake/Preliminary conferences form part of the NMAS, with guidance contained within the Practice Standards at section 3.1.

Interesting conversations with our members and the mediator community have highlighted the need for clarity on two important points:

- Given the inclusion of intake/preliminary conference in the Practice Standards, it is important and necessary to appropriately cover this in NMAS training courses, and to create further opportunities to learn and experience this stage via CPD opportunities.
- Nothing in the NMAS precludes inclusion of intake/preliminary conferences in the 25 hour mediation requirement for renewal of accreditation. The presence of this stage in the Practice Standards supports inclusion of this stage in a renewal application. The MSB will soon be adding to the FAQ section of the website to clarify this.

MANAGING NEW MEDIATOR EXPECTATIONS

The pandemic has led to more than an increase in mediation courses offered online - It has also led to an increase in registrations for these courses.

It is also important to clearly establish the steps required before an individual can refer to themselves as a NMAS accredited mediator. In some circumstances there has been confusion about this:

1. Completion of a training program that meets the requirements set out in 2.3 of the NMAS; and
2. Satisfactory assessment of competence in an assessment that meets the requirements set out in 2.4 of the NMAS; and
3. Meeting other approval requirements (such as professional indemnity insurance and character references) as required under section 2.1 of the NMAS; and
4. Application to a RMAB; and
5. Listing on the National Register (by the RMAB)

We refer you to the [downloadable PDF documents and the short animated videos on our website](#). You might find these helpful to include in your training.

We also strongly encourage you to update your current training offerings on the [MSB Calendar Hub](#). If you require assistance with this please do not hesitate to contact our Secretariat, Jenny Watson.

RMAB CRITERIA AND OBLIGATIONS

The MSB are in the process of designing a checklist for RMABs. This is being designed to support you, and to assist new staff members. Recent enquiries received by the MSB have highlighted a couple of key areas that we would like to refocus your attention on:

- RMABs need to have at least 10 NMAS mediators who are bonafide members, panelists or employees. Please note that this requires a sustainable approach, as MSB membership requirements must be demonstrated on an annual basis.
- A complaint handling system that meets the Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes or the ability to refer to one. Please note the importance of being adequately resourced to receive complaints relating to a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner, where the FDRP is not employed by an organisation and is accredited by you, the RMAB.

We refer you to Part IV of the NMAS for further information.

Please also note that there are other categories of MSB membership should the requirements in Part IV prove unsustainable for your organisation. For example, if you provide training under the NMAS you might prefer to be a Training Organisation Member. You will still be listed on the MSB website as a training provider, have access to the training calendar hub and MSB support, and be licensed to use the certification trademark as a member organisation.

Finally, as an RMAB or Training Organisation Member, it is important to have resources and knowledge in place to support your mediators. Individual mediator requests for information or support go directly to you - our member organisations, and not to the MSB. We are here to support you in addressing these, and you are welcome to contact us at any stage.

HAVE YOU GOT A QUESTION?

Have you or one of your members got a question for us?

You may well find the answer in the FAQ section of our website. We continue to develop this so that it is a helpful resource for all.

Be sure to take a look, and feel free to share this link with your members:

<https://msb.org.au/resources/faqs>

If you can't find what you need, please don't hesitate to contact our Secretariat, Jenny Watson at coordinator@msb.org.au or start a conversation with any of our directors:

Bianca Keys (Chair) - NSW
Andrew Bickerdike (Deputy Chair) - VIC
Doug Murphy QC (Hon Treasurer) - QLD
Linda Kochanski (Hon Secretary) - QLD
Greg Rooney - SA
Peter Condliffe - VIC
Christopher Boyle - WA
Stephen Dickinson - SA