

## ***Proposal for Comment***

# **Extension of Australian College of Health Informatics (ACHI) to include New Zealand**

ACHI is Australia's peak health informatics professional body. It works to foster professionalism in the health informatics community and to enhance the national capacity in health informatics in research, education and training, policy and system implementation. Membership in ACHI is a mark of one's professional standing.

ACHI started within Australia in 2002 by the nomination of Foundation Fellows, of which there were 20. From there ACHI has expanded using an application process where a panel of Fellows ranks new applicants on a points system based on their achievements, as well as applying criteria regarding years of health informatics activity. At present one can apply to become a Fellow, Member, Student Member or Associate Member of ACHI. While ACHI does not explicitly require that its members are Australian citizens or residents, its mission is explicitly focused on Australia as a nation.

Expansion of the scope of ACHI to explicitly include New Zealand would provide opportunity for New Zealanders to be recognised at this level. It would underscore and enhance the trans-Tasman community, recognising the profound ties between Australia and New Zealand and the fact that we are stronger working, and learning, together. It would provide a medium for professional interchange of ideas as the two nations continue to strive to achieve greater benefits from health informatics.

There are obvious relevant precedents for ANZ societies when one looks to medical specialties, including the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists. Moreover, in light of the existence of the Asia Pacific Association for Medical Informatics (APAMI), an ANZ society is probably the right extent for the organisation as compared to a broader regional scope (e.g., aiming to include points further north, such as Singapore). This raises the question of the name of an expanded ACHI. "Australian and New Zealand College of Health Informatics" (hence, ANZCHI) rather than "Australasian College of Health Informatics" would give the clearest delineation of the scope of the expanded organisation.

It is proposed that ACHI modify its constitution, including its name and the name of its membership and fellowship awards, to accommodate expansion of its scope to include New Zealand, to be known hereafter as the Australian and New Zealand College of Health Informatics (ANZCHI); and that Health Informatics New Zealand (HINZ) concurrently recognise the relationship with ANZCHI; and ANZCHI endorse the HINZ journal, *Health Care and Informatics Review Online* along with *electronic Journal of Health Informatics*.

*Proposed 31 December, 2008 by Jim Warren, HINZ Chair, ACHI Foundation Fellow and Membership Committee Chair*