

28 June 2023

State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)  
Locked Bag 2906  
Lisarow, NSW. 2252  
Email: [CTPPolicy@sira.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CTPPolicy@sira.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: State Insurance Regulatory Authority Draft Australian Clinical Guidelines for Health Professionals Managing People with Whiplash-Associated Disorders**

Thank you for the invitation to provide feedback on the Draft Australian Clinical Guidelines for Health Professionals Managing People with Whiplash-Associated Disorders.

Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) is the peak professional association for exercise and sports science professionals in Australia, representing more than 10,500 members comprising university qualified Accredited Exercise Physiologists, Accredited Sports Scientists, Accredited High-Performance Managers and Accredited Exercise Scientists.

ESSA is pleased to see that exercise physiologists are included as part of the multidisciplinary team in the guidelines. The recent ESSA National Workforce Profile Report (attached) shows that there are a significant proportion of the 7,472 ESSA accredited professionals working with clients with musculoskeletal injuries and conditions (4,452 or almost 58%), and chronic pain conditions (2,435 or 32.5%). Additionally, the reports notes that exercise physiologists work within funding schemes such as motor vehicle accident schemes where whiplash is encountered as an injury.

ESSA commend SIRA's revisions to the Australian Clinical Guidelines for Health Professionals Managing People with Whiplash-Associated Disorders and acknowledge that these revisions represent a valuable shift towards a holistic approach, informed by understandings of wellness and the biopsychosocial model.

It is evident that SIRA have approached the revision of these guidelines via a very thorough process, which has resulted in sound recommendations for treatment management. The literature looks to be comprehensively reviewed and the recommendations appear to be consistently agreed to by the panel, in a fashion that shows consensus.

Opportunities to further enhance the Australian Clinical Guidelines for Health Professionals Managing People with Whiplash-Associated Disorders have also been identified in the subsequent paragraphs.

Firstly, the need for training this is mentioned in several areas of the guidelines. The amount of information provided on training varies and in relation to neck-specific exercises and psychologically informed exercise, there is little detail except to say that training by health care professionals is required for the treatment to be effective. ESSA recommends that the inclusion of details related to training implementation and/or governance be considered.

Whilst recognising that there is a need to meet standards for training and care pathways the guidelines may not be feasible to implement in the rural and remote context, due to resourcing and workforce challenges. Clarification about regional, rural, and remote provision of care, particularly considering implementation practicalities and barriers if specific training for the health care providers is required and/or mandated in these contexts should be provided. ESSA acknowledge that it may not be feasible to develop guidelines that meet all needs within rural and remote services. **ESSA recommends that the challenges of rural and remote services be acknowledged in the guidelines with adaptations or workarounds discussed for regional, rural, and remote context.**

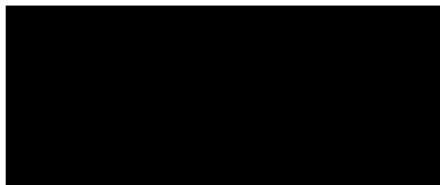
Finally, the ESSA recommends that the inclusion of evidence-based tools and resources, including technology enablers also be considered in the guidelines for practical application.

In summary, ESSA's view is that:

- ESSA commends SIRA's comprehensive review of the Australian Clinical Guidelines for Health Professionals Managing People with Whiplash-Associated Disorders
- The guidelines would be strengthened by the addition of any detail on how training requirements or mandates might be sustainably implemented and/or governed.
- Challenges of resourcing and workforce in regional, rural, and remote areas be acknowledged, and guidance provided on practical implementation of the guidelines
- The inclusion of evidence-based tools and resources be considered in the guidelines.

ESSA would welcome the opportunity to continue to engage on this issue, working with SIRA to deliver value-based health outcomes for injured people receiving treatment and rehabilitation services. Please contact ESSA Policy & Advocacy Advisor, Judy Powell, on 07 3171 3555 or [policy@essa.org.au](mailto:policy@essa.org.au) for further information.

Yours sincerely,



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