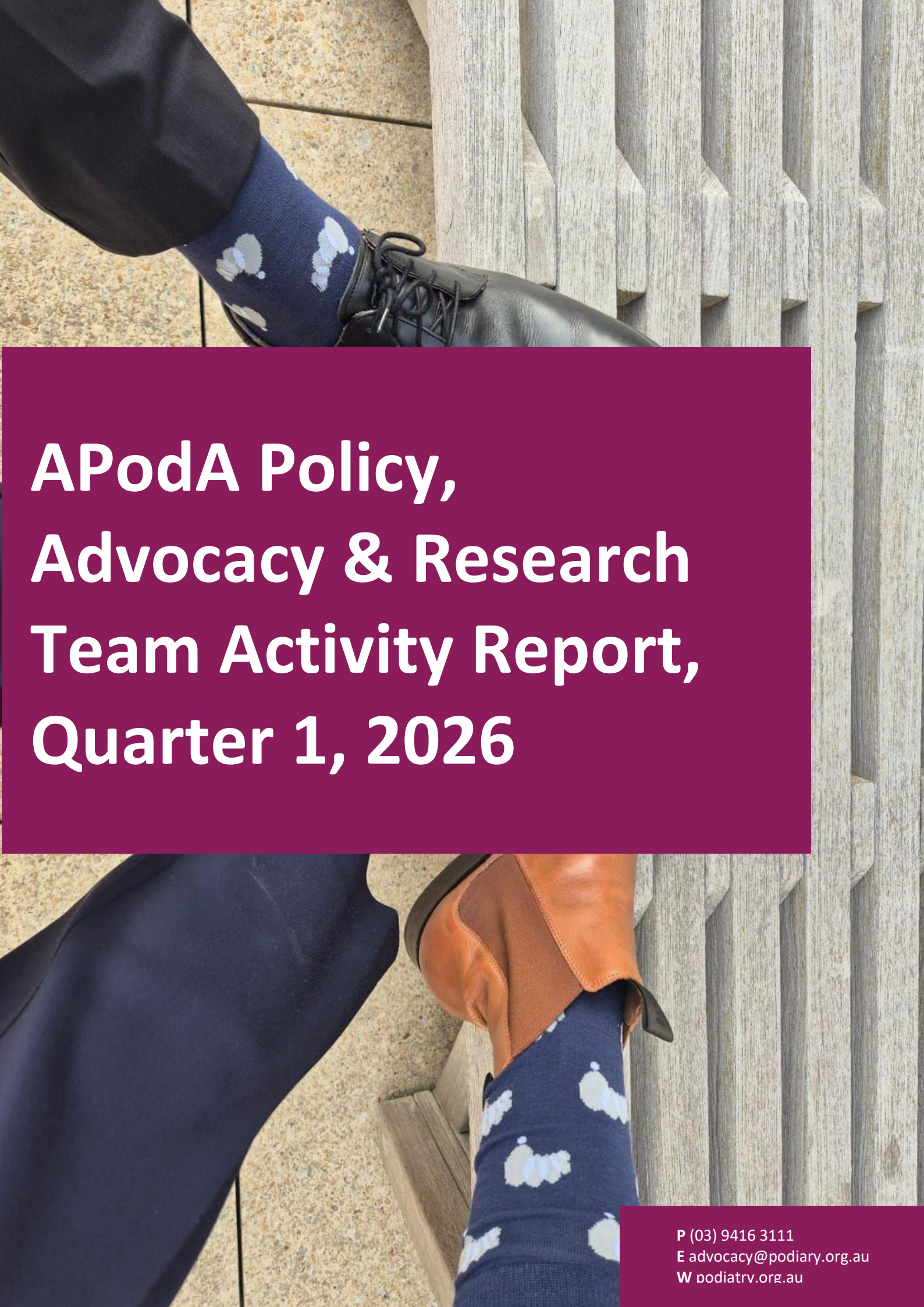




APodA Policy, Advocacy & Research Team Activity Report, Quarter 1, 2026

P (03) 9416 3111
E advocacy@podiatry.org.au
W podiatry.org.au

APodA Policy, Advocacy & Research Team Activity Report, Quarter 1, 2026

Introduction

APodA progressed work in several priority areas across quarter one of 2026 including aged care (Support at Home), disability (NDIS & Thriving Kids), primary care (Medicare), and engaged with the top policy makers in Australia on access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

This quarterly report provides the opportunity to look back on where and how the APodA have advocated for the profession and engaged with members to get involved in advocacy activities. It has also attempted to provide an overview of the work of the Policy and Advocacy (Panda) team across the whole of organisation.

In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, feedback on this report is welcome and can be directed to the Panda team via email, advocacy@podiatry.org.au

Top advocacy wins

Advocacy involves many small steps towards a larger win. In quarter one, here are wins of note:

- New Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) podiatry item number for Neurological Assessments
- More than 20 submissions lodged by podiatrists with the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, Inquiry into the Health Legislation Amendment (Prescribing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Bill 2025
- Senator Jacqui Lambie sponsored an Amendment in the Senate for podiatrists to be included on the PBS.
- Senator Steele-John lodged a motion for reading in the Senate, supporting podiatrists and podiatric surgeons to access PBS benefits when prescribing medicines.
- Met with Members of Parliament, Senators and parliamentary officials to advocate for inclusion of podiatry on the PBS (refer to Government Relations section of this report).
- Joined with other allied health peak organisations to advocate for allied health students to be included on the Prac Placement Program.

Written submissions lodged (13)

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Prescribing of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Bill 2025
Federal Treasury: Pre-budget submission 2026-27
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs: Inquiry into Transition of the Commonwealth Home Support Program to Support at Home
Qld Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT): Issues Paper 6 – Health Practitioner Disciplinary Jurisdiction
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): 2025-26 Annual Pricing Review
Podiatry Board of Australia: Draft registration standard for experienced internationally qualified health practitioners
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): Getting it Right - A New Definition For NDIS Providers
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): NDIS Rules - Public consultation on new framework planning

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport: Inquiry into rural, regional and remote Medicare access and funding
Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Advisory Committee (MRAC): Review of referred Chronic Condition Management Services
Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing: Allied Health and Other Practitioner Groups Workforce Survey Review
Australian Government Department of Health: NDIS Defining Therapy Supports, Consultation with Allied Health Sector (Closed consultation with AHPA, APoDA submission included as an appendix)
Fair Work Commission: Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020 – Draft Determination (March 2026).



Government Relations, engagement with policy and decision-makers

Parliament House Event – Joint advocacy for Prac payment with Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA). Sponsored by Independent, Helen Haines, MP and Senator for ACT, David Pocock. Picture above has podiatry student Beth Kerr at the press conference and also includes Senator Fatima Payman, MPs Dr Sophie Scamps, Andrew Gee and Kate Chaney
Office of the Hon Mark Butler, MP (2 meetings), Minister for Health, ageing, disability and the NDIS.
Office of Senator Lambie (4 meetings), Senator for Tasmania
Office of Senator Steele-John (2 meetings), Australian Greens spokesperson for Health and Mental Health, Disability Inclusion and the NDIS
Office of Senator Ruston, Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care
Office of Senator Canavan, Leader of the National Party
Senator Askew, Member of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Office of Senator Tyrell, Senator for Tasmania
Office of Senator Hanson, Senator for Queensland
Office of Senator Payman, Senator for Western Australia

Consultations completed

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): NDIS- Improving service agreements
Australian Digital Health Agency: Australian Clinical Data for Interoperability (AUCDI) Release 3 – Draft for Community Comment

Engagement with Strategic Stakeholders

Ahpra Podiatry Board of Australia
Diabetes Australia
Maurice Blackburn
HBF
Bupa
Healthia

Representation

AHPA working group meetings held monthly – Aged Care, Primary Care, Disability, Digital Health. Member Collaborative Forum is bi-monthly.
Reference group to support the update of the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (AICGs) – Emma Coombes
Thriving Kids Event at Parliament House, Canberra – Bianca Knight, Matthew Hotchkis
ACT Allied Health Forum, Canberra - Ricky Lee
Research Focus Groups - Perspectives on multidisciplinary care for people with musculoskeletal conditions in allied health private practice in Australia – barriers, facilitators and opportunities for collaboration – Ricky Lee & Laura Kelly
Reference Committee - Enhancing Linked-data Evaluation for Ageing and policy Transformation (ELEVATe) – Kristine McKenzie
Pharmacy Guild Stakeholder Breakfast
Qld Press Club, address by Qld Minister for Health, the Hon. Time Nicholls
Primary Care Conference, hosted by Department of Health, Disability and Aged Care, Canberra
Diabetes Summit, hosted by Diabetes Australia, Canberra
Clinician Input for Dept of Health on Associated Providers guidance resource – Laura Khuu

Projects

Vascular Assessment Consensus Paper – support for Delphi Project with marketing.
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Vascular Assessment Research – agreement being negotiated
Workforce Profile Report: - Agreement to progress with a plan to engage in consultation to develop a Workforce Strategy. - Agreement to do a descriptive profile report with available data from APodA and Ahpra.
Costing Project – Meeting with Researcher

Research requests

Integration of 3D scanning and gait analysis technology in clinical podiatry practice
New graduate allied health preparedness for collaborative practice
Client selection, procedural steps and clinical rational when performing non-incisional nail surgery
Understanding Clinicians' Perceptions and Needs for Applying Biomechanics in Clinical Practice: A Mixed-Methods Study
Current practice of corticosteroid injection for common foot and ankle conditions in Australia
Artificial intelligence-assisted wound management: perspectives of Australian healthcare professionals
Exercise and diabetes-related foot complications: health professionals' understanding and barriers to implementation

Whole of Organisation

During quarter one, the Panda team worked collaboratively across other pillars and service areas within APodA to contribute to delivering on a range of activities. These are noted below.

Marketing - EDM

- APodA advocacy update for January, February and March 2026
- Contributed to SIG EDMs

Marketing - Media

- Back to School Campaign – secured Channel 7 News Coverage
- Back to School Campaign – secured WinTV Coverage
- PBS – secured ABC Radio Adelaide drive time interview
- Developed media release for PBS

Marketing - Website pages

- NDIS - updated in Member services area and Advocacy area
- Aged care - updated in Member services area and developed a new Advocacy landing page.
- PBS – developed a new advocacy landing page.
- Latest News website page:
 - APodA supports AHPA's push for equitable Prac Payments for allied health students
 - Updated guidance: Aged Care Worker Screening Requirements
 - APodA advocacy update for January, February and March 2026
 - Thriving Kids: Podiatry supports early childhood development from the ground up
 - Putting patients first: APodA calls for Senate to back common-sense PBS parity for podiatry
 - Joint statement from AHPA and allied health peak associations re: NDIS planning

Marketing – Social media content

- AHPA Prac Payment Campaign – carousel and video
- NDIS & Support at Home – Consultation and Awareness (SIGs)
- PBS – 1. Call for members to lodge submissions 2. Prescribing Amendment



- Support at Home – call for stories
- CHSP to SaH transition
- New resource – understanding the new Aged Care Act
- PBA Infection Protection and Control Guidelines
- 2026 Jobs and Skills Australia: Occupation Shortage List Survey
- Updated Guidance: Aged Care Worker Screening Requirements - protect sensitive information
- Juvenile Arthritis Week

Marketing - Stride

- Article in March Edition on PBS

Member services – practice support

- Assisted with daily practice support calls and emails with podiatrists on how to work with the Support at Home rules, NDIS policies, and TGA registration.

Member services - Education

- Delivered an education webinar on advocacy – 195 registered, 144 attended.

Member services – resources

- Unfair contract terms in Support at Home Provider agreements
- FAQs for associated providers for Support at Home agreements.
- Advocacy letter templates for PBS, Aged Care Reform and NDIS

Member services – SIGS

- Attendance at monthly meetings with MIP, PIB, MSK, APP, PAC

Systems

- Contributed to renewal questions for 2026.

