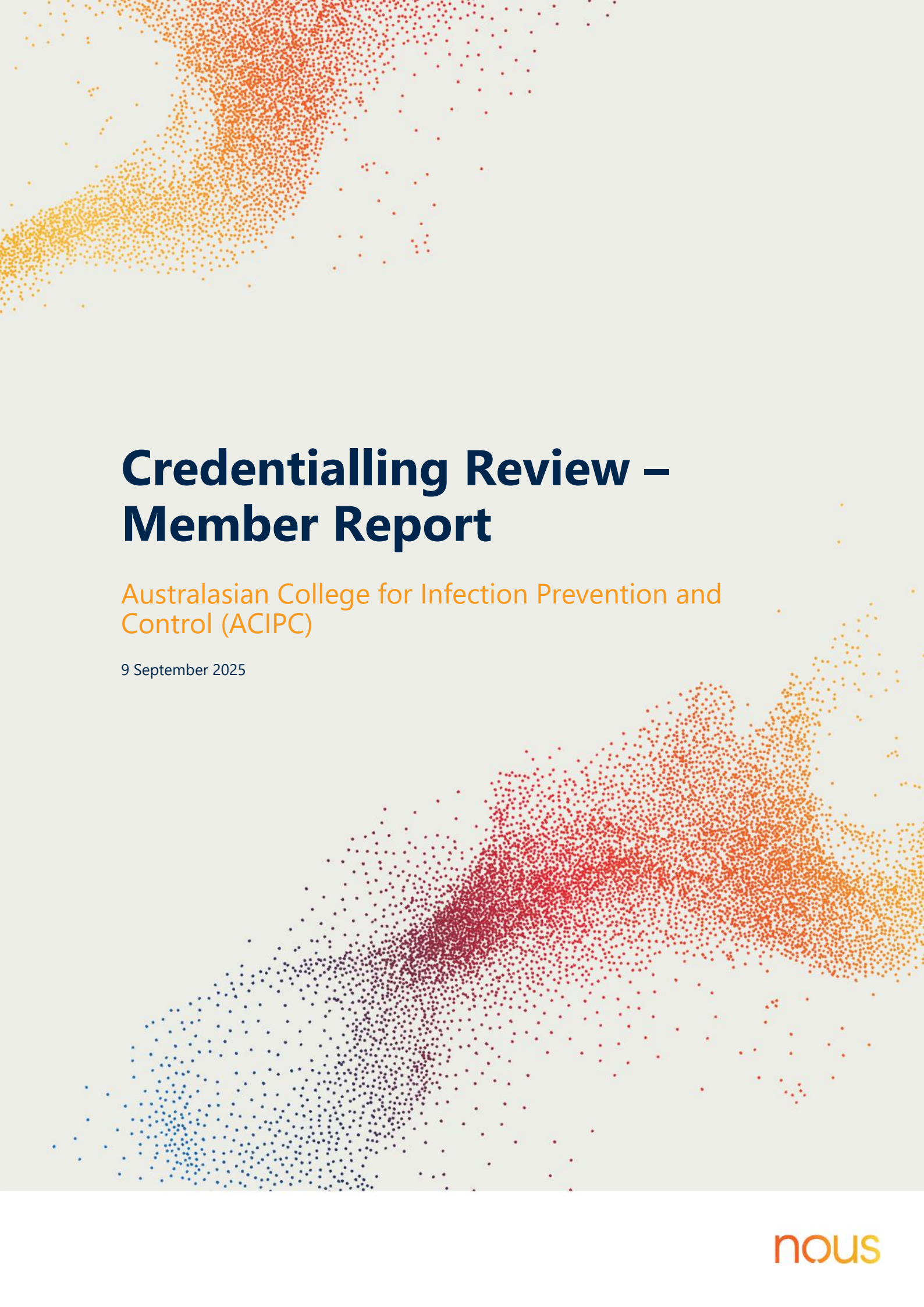




Credentialling Review – Member Report

Australasian College for Infection Prevention and
Control (ACIPC)

9 September 2025

Review scope and methodology

The Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC) engaged Nous Group (Nous) to undertake an external, independent review of its credentialling program (the Program) – a priority for the College as set out in the [Strategy and Implementation Plan for 2023-28](#).

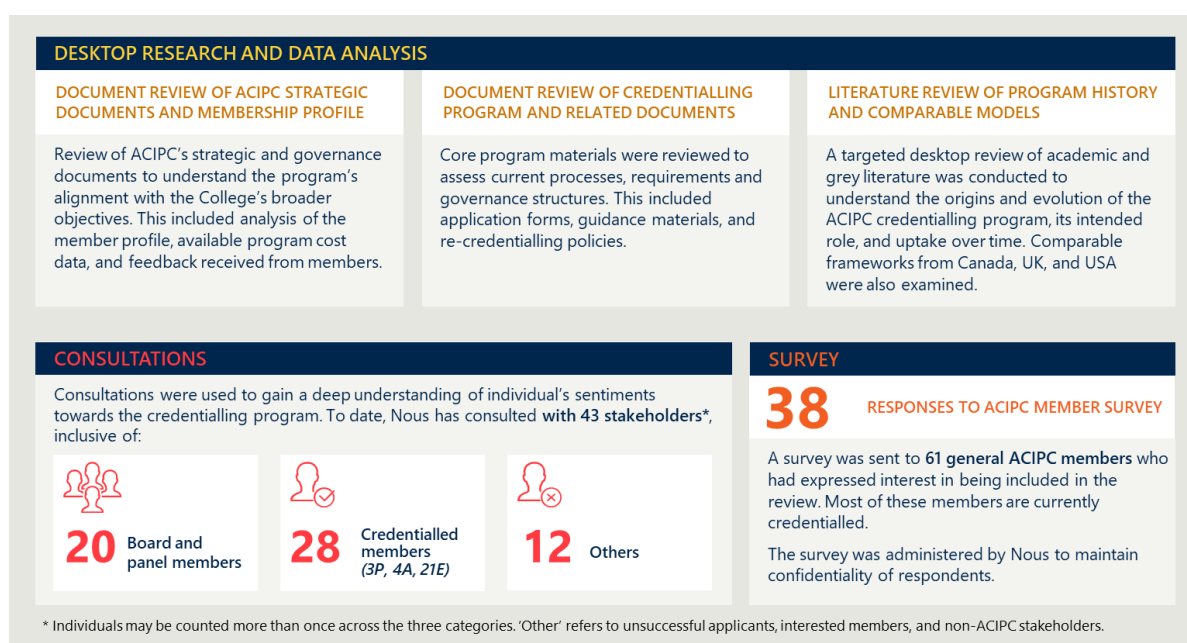
The objective of the review was to ensure the Program continues to recognise and support the diverse skills, knowledge, and professional development of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) professionals across all sectors.

Specifically, the review aimed to provide an objective and comprehensive assessment that will inform recommendations to:

- Strengthen industry recognition of IPC credentialling as a measure of knowledge and expertise.
- Identify opportunities to facilitate greater uptake of credentialling in all settings, including enhancements to ACIPC's internal processes.
- Determine the ideal structure and governance arrangements for the management of the Program.

The review drew on a range of data sources to inform the findings and recommendations (Figure 1).

Figure 1 | Primary and secondary data sources



Strengths of the credentialling Program

Members broadly view the Program as a valuable foundation for professional recognition and development. While improvement opportunities exist, there are key strengths of the Program, identified through consultations and survey responses. These strengths are listed below:

- **The Program is underpinned by a strong foundation and seen as a valuable tool for protecting and advancing the 'traditional' (hospital-based, nursing) Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) role.** There is recognition the credentialling program is important for establishing IPC as a recognised profession, reflecting ACIPC's efforts to standardise, promote and advance the role of IPC professionals, in particular the 'traditional' Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) role within hospital

settings. Members broadly agree on refining and strengthening the existing framework, viewing it as a foundation for long-term development of IPC capability and professional standing.

- **Early career IPC practitioners view the Program as a valuable progression pathway.**
It is seen as a structured pathway for growth, particularly following completion of the Foundations course. Participants describe the Primary and Advanced tiers as useful to build confidence, credibility, and early professional identity.
- **The Program's visibility and perceived value are increasing in some jurisdictions.**
Some credentialled members report that credentialling is now included as a desirable criterion in job descriptions or acknowledged during recruitment processes. These reports are more common in larger health services and/or jurisdictions with senior credentialled members.
- **The peer review model is valued for its rigour and credibility.**
Some stakeholders express a high level of trust in the credentialling review process, particularly in the role of experienced peers as assessors. Participants note that having their reflective submissions reviewed by "people who understand the work" provides reassurance and legitimacy.
- **Reflective writing is a challenging, but valuable, professional development exercise.**
Although often described as challenging, the reflective writing component is also a rewarding undertaking in the course of a professional career. Most participants note that it prompts deep self-assessment and is a meaningful opportunity to consolidate their practical experience and learnings.
- **The available tools and Panel support help guide applicants through the process.**
Some applicants report that guidance materials including the checklist, webinars, and informal support from Panel members help make the process more manageable. These supports are valued for improving clarity and building confidence, particularly among first-time applicants.

Review findings

While the Program is seen as a valuable step toward professional recognition, most ACIPC stakeholders (credentialled and non-credentialled members) identify a number of opportunities to strengthen its clarity, accessibility, and relevance across the broader IPC workforce and ACIPC member base.

The review findings are as follows:

1. **The framework should be enhanced to better reflect the diversity of IPC roles.**
The current design is aligned to 'traditional', hospital-based ICP roles and less suited to those working in aged care, public health, education, community or consultancy roles.
2. **The emphasis on formal qualifications creates challenges for experienced applicants.**
Recognising extensive practical IPC experience alongside formal qualifications would help make the Program more inclusive.
3. **The purpose and value of credentialling is not clearly defined and consistently understood.**
Many members are unclear about what credentialling is intended to achieve, what it enables in terms of professional advancement or system recognition, and how it differs from Fellowship.
4. **Participation is modest and concentrated in particular sectors.**
Credentialling participation is low relative to ACIPC's total membership and concentrated among senior nurses / in metropolitan hospitals / in Qld and NSW. Expanding participation across all sectors would further align with the College's broader objectives, mission, vision, and values.
5. **Governance arrangements and decision-making processes require clarification.**
Clarifying governance arrangements and decision-making processes would enhance the diversity of

Panel members, which aligns with best practice and other ACIPC governance bodies. This will support transparency and inclusivity.

6. **The application process should be streamlined.**

Applicants describe the application process as time-consuming and difficult to navigate, particularly the documentation requirements and verification. Most applicants are unclear on the value of all the application requirements. Most describe the process as 'subjective'.

7. **The recredentialling process is described as burdensome and not proportionate to benefit.**

While credentialled members don't wish to 'lose' their credential – and so there is a strong drive to participate in the process – the three-year cycle and evidence requirements are viewed by some as onerous and duplicative with the initial application.

8. **Credentialling affirms individual expertise but is not yet widely recognised or embedded across the health system.**

While some members report individual validation, formal recognition by employers, regulators, and policy bodies is limited and varies across jurisdictions.

Recommendations and next steps

Nous has made a number of recommendations to build on the strengths of the Program (see Table 1 below), and to address the findings outlined above. The recommendations have been endorsed by the ACIPC Board, and implementation planning is now underway.

Table 1 | Summary of recommendations

#	Recommendation
	Clarify and publicly communicate the purpose of credentialling within ACIPC's strategic and professional framework
1	There is uncertainty about what credentialling is intended to achieve and how it differs from other ACIPC initiatives. Clarifying its purpose will support member engagement, ensure consistency in communication, and reinforce the Program's alignment with ACIPC's strategic objectives.
	Clarify the distinction between credentialling and Fellowship, and articulate their distinct purposes
2	The distinction between credentialling and Fellowship is unclear to many members, particularly at the Expert level, where both are perceived as a recognition of senior expertise. Without clear differentiation, members may be uncertain about which pathway to pursue and the different value each provides.
	Develop a formal strategy and outcome measures for the Program aligned to ACIPC's mission and vision
3	The absence of a formal strategy and outcome framework impacts the Program's ability to evolve and demonstrate value to the broader IPC workforce. Feedback highlights the need for stronger alignment between credentialling and ACIPC's strategic objectives, and for clearer articulation of its role in sector development.
4A	Establish best practice governance arrangements for the Panel

#	Recommendation
	There is an opportunity to formalise the rotation of Panel members to broaden representation across a diversity of roles, qualifications and experiences. This will strengthen transparency, support credibility, and ensure the Panel reflects the full breadth of ACIPC's membership.
4B	Formalise Panel culture and conduct expectations to support a consistent and respectful experience A reset of expectations following this review will support and strengthen internal cohesion and accountability within the Panel, and help ensure that all applicants experience consistent interactions and communications, regardless of outcome or Panel liaison.
5	Review the framework to focus on having more members attain the 'first' level of credentialling, including non-hospital-based IPCs. Remove the designation of 'Primary' There is good support for repositioning the first level of the current framework has a recognition of commitment to the IPC profession. Revising the designation and framing of this level will help drive broader participation and better reflect the diversity of ACIPC's membership.
6A	Incorporate other professional streams (such as aged care IPC Leads, researchers, veterinarians, and others) alongside the current clinically-focused stream for the Advanced and Expert level There's a need to make credentialling more inclusive and representative of the profession's evolving scope. Expanding the framework to support multiple pathways will ensure credentialling remains accessible and aligned with the full breadth of IPC practice.
6B	Broaden the framework to recognise diverse forms of IPC expertise, including nonAustralian Based members and roles in non-hospital settings Stakeholders express support for a more inclusive model that retains rigour while recognising the breadth of expertise across the IPC field. Aligning eligibility with ACIPC's broader goals will promote equity, accessibility, and international relevance, while preserving a clear standard for clinical ICP capability.
7	Enhance the objectivity of the assessment process by standardising criteria and providing consistent feedback to applicants Stakeholders are concerned that the assessment process overemphasises the critical reflective narrative, which is marked inconsistently and subjectively. Standardising assessment criteria and providing consistent feedback to applicants will improve fairness, consistency, and trust in the process.
8	Review and evaluate the purpose and value of each required component of the credentialling application Many stakeholders question the necessity or clarity of various application components, including the peer review process, the Statement of Service, and confidentiality concerns related to the critical reflective narrative. A focused review of the application component will ensure each

#	Recommendation
	element serves a clear purpose, aligns with the Program's goals, and supports a fair and inclusive experience for all applicants.
	Reassess recredentialing requirements in line with the updated Program strategy and objectives
9	Stakeholders broadly support the idea of periodic reassessment but describe the current three-year recredentialing process as duplicative and resource intensive. A targeted review of the requirements will help ensure the process remains rigorous while improving efficiency, accessibility, and relevance across different stages of a member's career.
	Standardise assessment criteria using published rubrics, exemplars, and guidance aligned to each level
10	Stakeholders report inconsistent feedback and uncertainty about how applications are assessed. Standardised criteria and clear guidance will help reduce subjectivity, promote fairness across assessments, and improve the applicant experience by managing expectations upfront.
	Following the redesign of the Program, revise and update Program materials and comms to explicitly reflect changes, and to include the evolving breadth of IPC practice across Australasia
11	The current Program materials and comms reflect 'traditional ICP roles', which inadvertently excludes and discourages participation from members whose contributions lie outside these settings. Revising the language and framing will support inclusivity, reduce ambiguity, and signal that credentialing is relevant and accessible to practitioners working across all ICP roles.
	Streamline the framework to support increased numbers of applications/credentialled members
12	Sustaining the Program at scale will require more efficient processes and clearer role delineation. Scenario planning will help ACIPC proactively manage future demand and maintain a high-quality, responsive assessment process as participation grows.
	Repurpose the Panel in line with changes to the framework and assessment process
13	Review the Panel's role to ensure it remains aligned with the Program's goals and maintains credibility across diverse IPC pathways, while maintaining the core principles of peer-led assessment.
	Maintain regular panel meetings and the 'buddy' system for new members
14	New Panel members report that regular meetings and the buddy system are valuable for building confidence and understanding assessment expectations.
	Develop and articulate the value proposition for members to be credentialled, including offering financial incentives and recognition
15	Members describe credentialing as personally meaningful but question its practical value in the absence of broader system recognition. Establishing a member-focused value proposition will

#	Recommendation
	support uptake, reinforce the Program's credibility, and encourage ongoing engagement. It also provides an opportunity to align incentives with ACIPC's strategic goals and better recognise the contributions of credentialled members.
16	Review the credentialling submission platform and/or member portal in line with a revised framework to facilitate the submission and streamlined assessment of applications Applicants describe the current submission process as time-consuming and difficult to navigate. Rethinking the platform for both applicants and assessors will improve efficiency, reduce administrative burden, and create a more positive experience.
17	Establish a structured follow-up process to monitor and assess the professional impact of credentialling There is currently no systematic process to evaluate the outcomes of credentialling for members. Capturing feedback post-credentialling will provide valuable data on the Program's effectiveness and support continuous improvement.
18	Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a revised credentialling framework, taking into account broader update of the Program A cost-benefit analysis is recommended to assess whether the Program is viable at its current scale, identify opportunities to improve efficiency, and ensure fees remain fair for applicants.
19	Promote credentialling to employers, the broader IPC workforce, and related professional bodies Credentialling remains largely unrecognised outside ACIPC and IPC professionals. Broader visibility is necessary for the Program to increase uptake, influence workforce planning, and deliver value to members.
20	Secure formal recognition of credentialling through partnerships with regulatory, standards, and workforce bodies Stakeholders consistently note that credentialling lacks external recognition, limiting its influence on workforce planning and career advancement. Formal recognition is necessary to improve the visibility, legitimacy and uptake of the Program. A top-down approach, led by ACIPC, will complement member-led advocacy and help position credentialling as a standard for IPC expertise.