

Communiqué

November 2012 meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

Introduction

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) works in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The functions of the Board include:

- developing the national standards, codes and guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice
- approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study
- registering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and students, and
- handling notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings nationally¹.

Members of the inaugural Board were appointed in July 2011 for three years by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Members' details can be found at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/About/board-members.aspx.

Registration

By the end of October there were 289 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners throughout Australia. This is a 4.7 per cent increase compared to the previous month.

The number of registered health practitioners by state and territory is as follows:

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
1	7	255	17	2	1	2	4	289

At the Board's Registration and Notification Committee meeting on 15 November 2012, a further three registrations were granted with conditions and three were granted with notations. The number of newly registered health practitioners by state and territory is as follows:

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
-	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	6

Application forms for registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner are available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Registration/Forms.aspx.

¹ Except in NSW, which has a co-regulatory system where complaint/notifications are handled by the Health Care Complaints Commission.

Registration renewals

Registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are reminded that their registration is due for renewal **by 30 November**.

The Board urges those practitioners who have yet to renew their registration to renew on time.

Practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time. There are significant consequences for individual practitioners who do not renew on time in the National Scheme. Under the National Law, Practitioners who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the National Register of Practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

Neither the Board nor AHPRA have any discretion about this as it is part of the National Law.

For more information

- Visit www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au for FAQs on renewal.
- Practitioners can check their registration details and expiry date on the Register of Practitioners at www.ahpra.gov.au.
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495

Other Board activities

Board's strategic statement and work plan, 2012-14

The Board has reviewed the first draft of its strategic statement and work plan, 2012-14. This is expected to be finalised at the Board's 12 December meeting.

Accreditation

The first meeting of the Board's new Accreditation Committee took place on 29 November in Melbourne.

The National Law confers functions, including decision making functions, directly on accreditation authorities, whether they are external organisations or accreditation committees.

There is a vacancy for one of the two practitioner positions on the Board's Accreditation Committee and AHPRA continues to promote this vacancy to registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Board vacancy

There is a vacancy on the Board for a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner from Queensland. AHPRA has sought applications by advertising expressions of interest and working closely with stakeholders in Queensland to fill this vacancy.

Stakeholder engagement

The Board Chairperson, Peter Pangquee, presented an update on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme to potential registrants as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners at the annual general meeting of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association (NATSIHWA) on 28 November in Melbourne.

Projects

The Board is represented on several Health Workforce Australia (HWA) funded projects, including:

- the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Multimedia Resource Package. For more information, go to www.hwa.gov.au/work-programs/workforce-innovation-and-reform/atsihw/multimedia-resource.
- Review of the Health Training Package, in particular the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care qualifications. For more information, go to

www.cshisc.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=975&Itemid=1008&limit=1&limitstart=2.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Health Practitioner Clinical Logbook review and update. For more information, go to www.hwa.gov.au/work-programs/workforce-innovation-and-reform/atsihw/log-books.

HWA has funded AHPRA on behalf of the Board to undertake a two-phase project on: (1) Registration Qualification Benchmarking, and (2) Safety Risk Assessment.

The first phase of this project has been completed. The second phase, which is in progress, will involve assessing the following.

- Which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care worker roles should be regulated based on an assessment of risk to the public?
- What qualifications should be regarded as the appropriate educational preparation for the registration of these practitioners?

The Board has finalised a discussion paper on this question as part of its targeted stakeholder consultation process. This discussion paper will be distributed to key stakeholders and posted on the Board's website www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au soon.

General matters

Annual Report

The 2011/12 annual report for AHPRA and National Boards was published in the first week of November on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/AHPRA-Publications.aspx. A brief section on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia appears on page 20.

Board meetings for 2013

The Board has confirmed its meeting schedule for 2013 as follows:

27 February	26 June	23 October
27 March	24 July	27 November
24 April	30 August	18 December
29 May	25 September	

Further information about national registration and the registration requirements of the Board, including a series of frequently asked questions, is available on the Board's website www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

Peter Pangquee

Chairperson

30 November 2012