

## Chair's welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia newsletter. This newsletter, which you'll receive twice a year, has been developed specifically to provide you with information on issues affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health profession.

With this in mind, in this first issue we've included many useful articles which we recommend you take the time to read. We've also included some details on each Board member to allow you to get to know us a little better and learn about our respective experiences in this profession.

Since our appointment as a Board in July 2011 and the regulation of this new profession from July last year, a lot has been achieved. However, there is still a lot of work to do to establish the Board's accreditation function. To this end, our new Accreditation Committee has been working hard on developing draft accreditation standards and processes for education providers to apply for accreditation. As part of our usual process, these draft standards will be open to public consultation to ensure we fully appreciate the likely impact of these proposals and any unintended consequences.

Throughout January and February the Board conducted a public consultation on the two questions: 'Which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care worker roles should be regulated based on an assessment of risk to the public', and 'What qualifications should be regarded as the appropriate educational preparation for the registration of these practitioners?'

The Board is very grateful to the many stakeholders who attended the consultation workshops, and the nine stakeholders who sent written submissions.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of our newsletter. Importantly, we hope to hear your views on the regulation of the profession. Please keep an eye on the [public consultation section](#) of the Board's website for your opportunity to comment on proposed standards, guidelines and codes affecting the profession.

### Peter Pangquee

Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

## Meet the National Board

Members of the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the National Board) were appointed for three years by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

### Functions of the Board

The functions of the National Board include:

- developing 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.



Left to right: front row – Clare Anderson, Peter Pangquee, Jane Schwager. Back row – Lisa O'Hara, Jenny Poelina, Renee Owen, Karrina DeMasi, Sharon Milera

## Board members



**Peter Pangquee, Board Chair and a practitioner member from the Northern Territory**

Peter's family on his father's side are Marrathiyiel people from Woodikupildiya, about 350km west of Darwin and on his mother's side, Antakirinja Matu-Yankunyjatjara people from

around Coober Pedy.

Peter has been an Aboriginal health worker (AHW) for over 30 years and is the Northern Territory Department of Health's Principal Aboriginal Health Worker Advisor within the Workforce Strategy Unit.

Peter has worked in community development, community welfare (child protection) and correctional services across the Top End as well as in AHW registration as NT Board Chair. He helped to develop the current National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Primary Health Care qualifications and has participated in many other national workforce projects.

Peter brings strong leadership to the Board as well as a wealth of knowledge about AHW practices in a regulatory environment.

**Clare Anderson, community member from the Australian Capital Territory**



Clare is a proud Alyawarr woman with family in the Lake Nash/Camooweal area, which is on the Northern Territory/Queensland border. She works for the Anyinginyi Aboriginal Health

Corporation as a Regional Tobacco Coordinator, leading the 'Tackling Smoking' program rollout across the Barkly region.

Clare has worked in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service sector for over 15 years, with a strong focus on the promotion of AHWs and their recognition as a profession.

**Karrina DeMasi, community member from the Northern Territory**



Karrina is a registered nurse and midwife and works in the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health, Business and Science at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

She brings valuable experience to the Board as a former member of the Aboriginal Health Workers Board of the Northern Territory, and through her educational and clinical work with AHWs in the Northern Territory.



**Sharon Milera, practitioner member from South Australia**

Sharon's people are proud Arabunna-Narungga people. Sharon has been a registered Aboriginal health worker for the past 15 years. She has managed and trained AHWs in remote communities in Central Australia and also worked in her own communities.



**Lisa O'Hara, practitioner member from New South Wales**

Lisa is a Ngyampaa woman, born in Griffith, NSW (Wiradjuri country). Lisa is Practice Manager at the Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service.

Lisa started her career as an enrolled nurse in 1990. She went on to become the Aboriginal Health Education Officer at Griffith Community Health Centre, and then to specialise in vascular health. After this, she moved into her current role in Community Controlled Health. She also spent three years facilitating at the Aboriginal Health College in Sydney while on annual leave, teaching Certificate III in Aboriginal Health Work and Certificate IV in Primary Health Care (both Community and Practice streams).

**Renee Owen, practitioner member from Victoria**



Renee's people are from Yorta Yorta Cummeragunja on the border of Victoria and New South Wales. Renee has been an AHW for 13 years and her studies through the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health

Organisation (VACCHO) have included many areas including governance and management. She currently works as the Health Services Manager at Wathaurong Aboriginal Health Service in Geelong.

**Jenny Poelina, practitioner member from Western Australia**



Jenny is a Nykina woman from the freshwater country of the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley. She is the Senior Manager at the Centre for Aboriginal Primary Health Care Training and Research (CAPTER) at the

Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council (KAMSC).

Jenny has worked in the acute care of Aboriginal people in a hospital setting as well as primary care for Aboriginal people in a community setting. She also worked as an >>

>> educator and coordinator of the Aboriginal Health Worker Training Program and helped develop resources for National Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care training. Jenny maintains her clinical skills by providing relief care from time to time in the KAMSC member services clinics.



**Jane Schwager, community member from New South Wales**

Jane lives and works in New South Wales and represents the interests of the general public. Her professional roles include membership of the NSW Administrative Decisions

Tribunal and consultancy in the community services and health policy areas. She also works as a nationally accredited mediator in alternative dispute resolution.

Jane is an experienced board director in both not for profit and government sectors. Jane served on the board of the Croc Festivals and assisted with their operations across many remote communities for 10 years. Her involvement in national and state consultations and reviews includes welfare reform and evaluating Aboriginal youth employment, education and community programs across rural NSW. She was previously the CEO of The Benevolent Society, the Social Policy Directorate (NSW) and the Department of Ageing and Disability (NSW).

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## National Board Accreditation Committee

The Board is one of the three boards that joined the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) in 2012 that decided to exercise accreditation functions through a committee of the Board. This is provided for under subsection 43(1)(b) of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The Accreditation Committee held its first meeting in November 2012 and met again on 27 February 2013. At this stage the committee has three members: Elaine Duffy (Chair), Sharon Wallace and Norma Lukies. There is a vacancy for a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner, which is being re-advertised.

AHPRA's Accreditation Unit has been working on resources to help the committee develop accreditation standards and processes, as well as a new accreditation cycle, as quickly as possible. These resources include comparing accreditation

standards and processes, including for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector qualifications, and documents which the committee can use as a starting point for developing its own standards and processes.

The committee is also working on:

- the transitional arrangements for existing programs of study
- the ongoing arrangements for monitoring programs of study
- a communication strategy, and
- posting information about the committee's functions and work online.

Once the accreditation standards have been drafted, they will be released for consultation and we will seek comment from practitioners, the community and other stakeholders.

Regular updates will be published online and in Board communiqués.

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## Consultation update

From July last year, Health Workforce Australia began funding the delivery and implementation of the Registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners: Benchmarking and Risk Assessment Project. This project forms part of HWA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Program, details of which can be found on [HWA's website](#).

In the second phase of this two-phase project the Board conducted public consultation on the questions: 'Which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care worker roles should be regulated based on an assessment of risk to the public', and 'What qualifications should be regarded as the appropriate educational preparation for the registration of these practitioners?'. This consultation ran from 15 January to 22 February this year.

The Board is very grateful to the 63 stakeholders who attended the consultation workshops in the eight state and territory capitals, and the nine stakeholders who sent written submissions. You can access the submissions on the [Past consultations](#) section of the Board's website.

Future consultations on the Board's standards, guidelines and codes will be published on the [Consultations](#) section of the website. We encourage you to comment on these proposals affecting the regulation of your profession.

## Continuing professional development

Under the National Law, all registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners must undertake continuing professional development (CPD) as a condition of registration. The Board has published guidelines to be used together with the *Continuing professional development registration standard*, which is available under the [Registration standards](#) tab on the website.

The standard applies to all registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners except students and those with non-practising registration. It lists seven requirements:

1. Every year when you renew your registration you will be asked to declare that you have met the CPD standard set by the Board. This declaration may be subject to audit.
2. You must hold a current first aid certificate which includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (this is a core requirement and is not included in your CPD hours).
3. You must complete a minimum of 60 hours of CPD activities over a three-year cycle, with a minimum of 10 hours in any one year.
4. Of the 60 hours over three years, at least 45 hours need to be formal CPD activities. The remainder may consist of informal CPD activities. Examples are provided in the *Guidelines for continuing professional development* under the [Codes and guidelines](#) tab.
5. You must record your CPD activities and produce these records when the Board requires you to do so as part of an audit investigation. The guidelines contain a template to help you plan and record your activities.
6. Records must be kept for four years.
7. CPD activities should be relevant to the context of your practice and your employing organisation.

Please include these CPD requirements in your annual conversation with your employer to plan your activities and ensure you meet the requirements in time for the renewal of your registration. Remember, the declaration that you have met your annual CPD requirements may be audited.

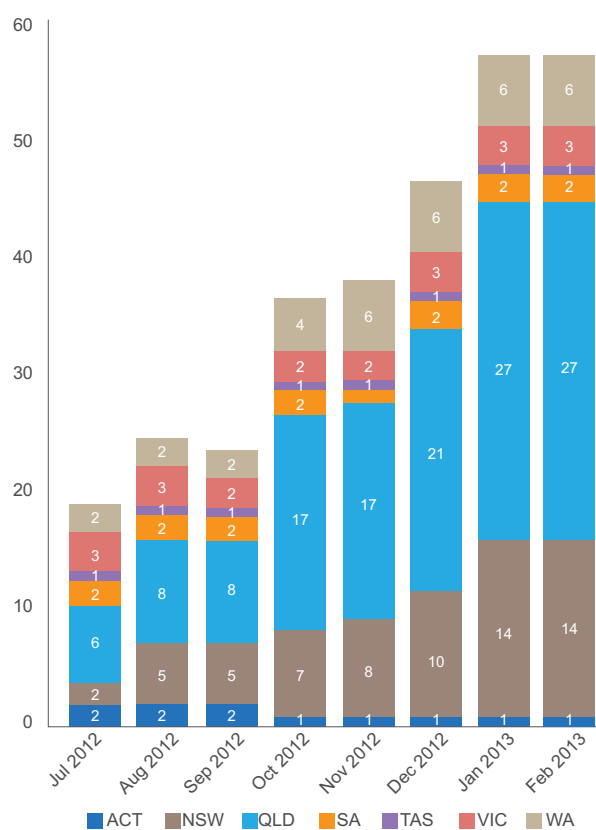
## Snapshot of the profession

By the end of February 2013 there were 276 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners throughout Australia. This is a 0.7 per cent increase from the previous month.

Overwhelmingly, registrants practice out of the Northern Territory, with 222 practitioners nominating the NT as their principal place of practice (PPP). This represents 80.4 per cent of all registrants of this profession.

The number of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in other states and territories is illustrated in the graph below. Queensland hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession, with 10 per cent. This is followed by New South Wales (5 per cent), Western Australia (2 per cent), and Victoria (1 per cent).

## Registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners: February 2013



## Accountability and transparency: panel and tribunal hearing decisions published

AHPRA and the National Boards' commitment to transparency and accountability continues with an expansion of the information published about legal issues and hearing decisions. AHPRA has published a table of [panel hearing decisions](#) dating back to July 2010. Summaries have been provided where there is educational and clinical value. Practitioners' names are not published, consistent with the requirements of the National Law. Some summaries of [tribunal decisions](#) are also provided, to help share information and guide practitioners.

## New national Community Reference Group

A Community Reference Group is being established by AHPRA and the National Boards. This group has been designed to advise AHPRA and National Boards on ways in which community understanding and involvement in our work can be strengthened. This might include:

- strategies for promoting greater community response to consultations
- ways in which the national registers of practitioners can be more accessible and better understood, and
- strategies for building greater community understanding of how practitioner regulation works.

AHPRA and the National Boards will work with the Community Reference Group to agree on a set of priorities. This will build on the feedback received at the recent community forums held across Australia in partnership with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF). The forums provided an opportunity for AHPRA and members of national and state boards to meet members of the public to explain how health practitioner regulation works and what it offers the community, and to get feedback on issues of concern.

The Community Reference Group will complement the role of community members of the National Boards. The group will consist of members from the community who are not health practitioners or current/past members of a National Board or committee in the National Scheme.

## Registration – renew online, renew on time

Registration renewal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners is due by **30 November 2013**. We want to give you plenty of advance notice.

Most health practitioners across the National Scheme now renew online, which is convenient and saves time. Renewing online also has benefits for the National Board – it reduces the reliance on hardcopy letters and forms, saving on production, printing and postage costs.

Email reminders to renew will be sent later in the year, when online renewal is open. Letters will be sent to practitioners without email.

## Update your contact details

Please check your contact details and update them if necessary in order to receive regular reminders from the Board and AHPRA. Set your email account to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to a 'junk email' box or account.

If you have not yet provided your email address to AHPRA or the Board, please do so as a matter of urgency.

To update your contact details, go online at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au), click 'online services', use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have a User ID complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry, or call 1300 419 495.

## Keeping in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at [www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au](http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au) for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia).
- Address mail correspondence to: Peter Pangquee, Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.



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