

Communiqué

May 2018 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 (National Scheme). Details about individual Board members can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The Board's most recent quarterly meeting was held in Darwin in May, the second for 2018. The Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) in between these meetings to consider registration and notification (complaint) matters about individual practitioners. The Board then meets to consider policy and other matters.

We publish this communiqué on our website. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Update on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

In our last communiqué, we told you about the beginning of the National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA, the 15 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of 'Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.'

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a draft *Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan* for AHPRA.

All of the National Boards have now endorsed the strategy's *Statement of intent*.

Presentations at the May Board meeting

The Board was very pleased to have met and heard from three important stakeholders with insights and a great depth of knowledge in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health areas.

Three members of the Northern Territory Department of Health's workforce strategy division: Iris Raye, Meredith Sullivan and Paul Burgess attended the meeting and gave insights into the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners in the Top End. This was particularly interesting since this is where the bulk of these registered health practitioners come from.

Paul is the Clinical Director of Coordinated Care at Top End Health Services. His presentation highlighted the opportunities and challenges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner services in the Top End and also the great work these practitioners do and the effect it has on their communities.

Janine Mohamed CEO of Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) also met with the Board in Darwin, with strong messages of collaboration, showing how these three professions (nursing, midwifery and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners) can work in harmony, complimenting each other's roles, to contribute to closing the gap.

Karl Briscoe, from National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association (NATSIHWA), gave the Board an update on the work being done for both the Aboriginal Health Worker and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice professions by that professional association.

The Board was pleased to learn of the new online portal which allows members to record their continuing professional development (CPD), activities and receive reports suitable for use if audited (under the terms of their registration), and to help plan and make the most of the educational opportunities out there. Karl demonstrated the easy-to-use system, which makes recording of CPD simple and all in one place, getting rid of the need to retain paper copies of certificates and receipts.

NATSIHWA membership is free and makes the busy lives of Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners much easier and is a great place to swap information and learn from others.

You can search for NATSIHWA on [YouTube](#) and see lots of stories and other information about its work.

Review of registration standards

At its May meeting the Board considered the welcome feedback it received from the public consultation phase of its review of registration standards in conjunction with the other National Boards that started under the National Scheme in 2012. The registration standards that are being reviewed are:

- professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII)
- continuing professional development (CPD)
- recency of practice (RoP)
- English language skills, and
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander registration standard.

The Board was very grateful to have received so much thoughtful and considered feedback from a wide variety of individuals and entities. The public consultation period has now closed.

Issues of particular interest from stakeholders included the changes to the CPD registration standard, where it is proposed to simplify requirements to 20 hours of CPD per year which includes five hours of 'interactive' CPD.

As explained in the draft, revised registration standard, 'interactive' does not necessarily mean leaving home to attend a course. Some feedback received thought there may be an impact to service delivery if staff had to leave for periods of time to attend formal CPD events. Interactive CPD may be online, it may be conducted with other practitioners (not necessarily from the same profession) at work.

The main thing is that practitioners choose CPD that relates directly to the jobs they are employed to do – whether clinical, administrative or something different. The Board does not define your scope of practice. What you do as a registered practitioner is generally determined by what role you are employed to do.

Other feedback focussed on concerns about the removal of the (currently required) first aid certificate in the RoP registration standard. As the Board does not define scope of practice for registrants, it knows that not everyone works in a job where the first aid certificate is required. If it is, it is generally provided by the workplace/employer.

While it's good for everyone to have a current first aid certificate, the Board must be careful not to put an unintended barrier in place by establishing requirements that are not necessary for all.

The next step in the process for changing to the new registration standards is to send the draft revised registration standards to the Health Ministers, through the Ministerial Council, for their consideration for approval.

We'll keep you up to date on the timing of the changes.

In the meantime, the currently published registration standards remain in force.

Visit to Danila Dilba Health Service

After the meetings were finished in Darwin, the Board was hosted to a visit at Danila Dilba Health Service. The members were generously welcomed at the clinics they visited and were inspired by the services provided to the community there.



Vacancy on the Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee (the Committee) of the Board is currently seeking expressions of interest from registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners to join as members.

Under its [Terms of Reference](#), the Accreditation Committee is responsible for the development of accreditation standards and to submit these to the Board for approval and, where an education provider applies for accreditation against the standards, to assess both the education provider and the relevant programs of study. This Committee is not responsible for setting registration standards, registering health practitioners or investigating complaints about health practitioners.

Being on the Committee includes monitoring accredited programs of study, carrying out site visits and attending meetings (often by teleconference).

Vexing not vexatious: Report finds more risk in not reporting

New independent research commissioned by AHPRA takes a first international look at vexatious complaints, finding there is more risk from people not reporting concerns than from making dubious complaints.

It also found that while being on the receiving end of a complaint is tough – the complaint is much more likely to be vexing than vexatious.

The report will be used to inform best practice for reducing, identifying, and managing vexatious complaints and helps to identify opportunities to work with others to help reduce their frequency and adverse consequences.

For further information read the research summary report [Reducing, indentifying and managing vexatious complaints](#) on the AHPRA website.

Are your contact details up to date?

It's important to make sure that your contact details registered with AHPRA are up to date so you don't miss reminders to renew or important information from the Board. You can check your contact details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website.

Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call 1300 419 495.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners on its [website](#). Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Practitioners.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on www.ahpra.gov.au. Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Conclusion

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners on our website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

Keep in touch with the Board

Call AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or 08 8901 8527 if you:

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- have any questions
- need help filling in forms, or
- are having trouble explaining to your employer about requirements. You can ask your employer to call this number.

To contact the Board, please call Jill Humphreys on 03 8708 9066 or send an email to jill.humphreys@ahpra.gov.au.

Renee Owen

Chair

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

13 June 2018