

Communiqué

May 2013 meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

Introduction

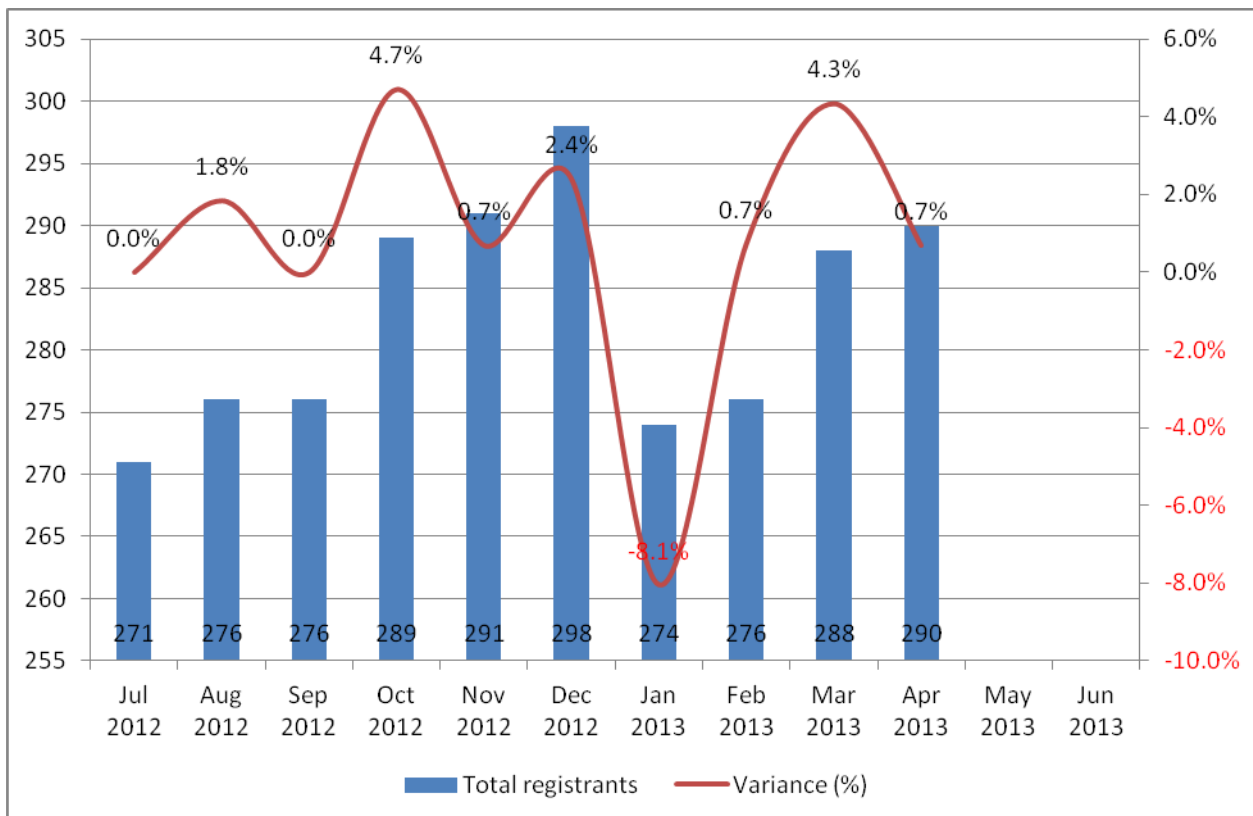
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) works in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). Details on individual Board members can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The Board's last meeting was held on 30 May 2013 at AHPRA's Northern Territory Office at 22 Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin.

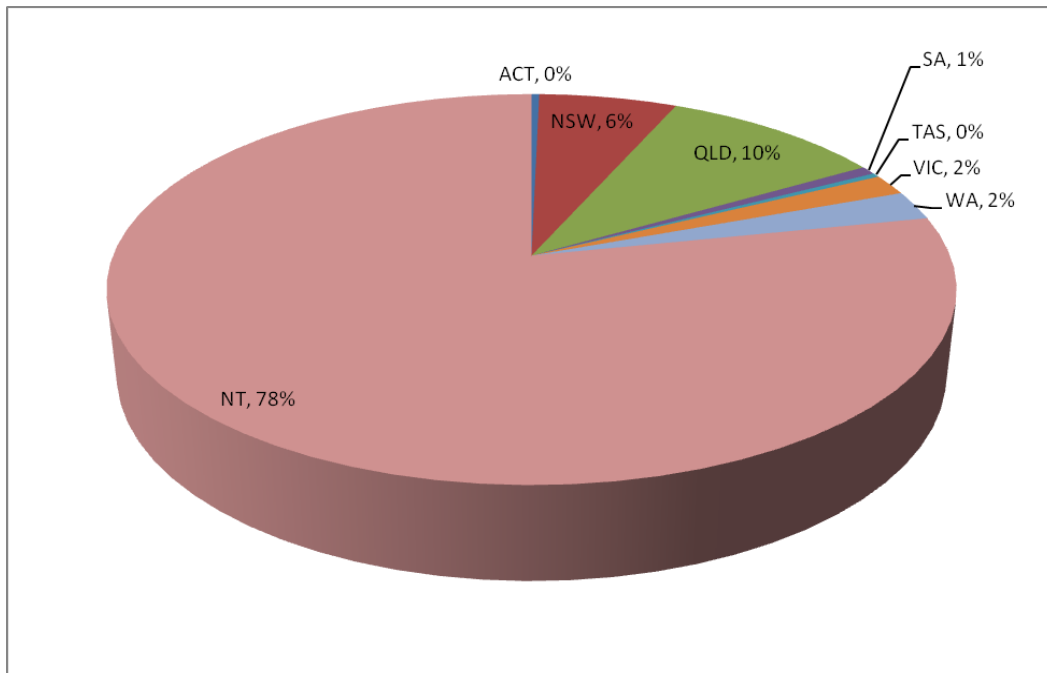
Registration

Current registration figures

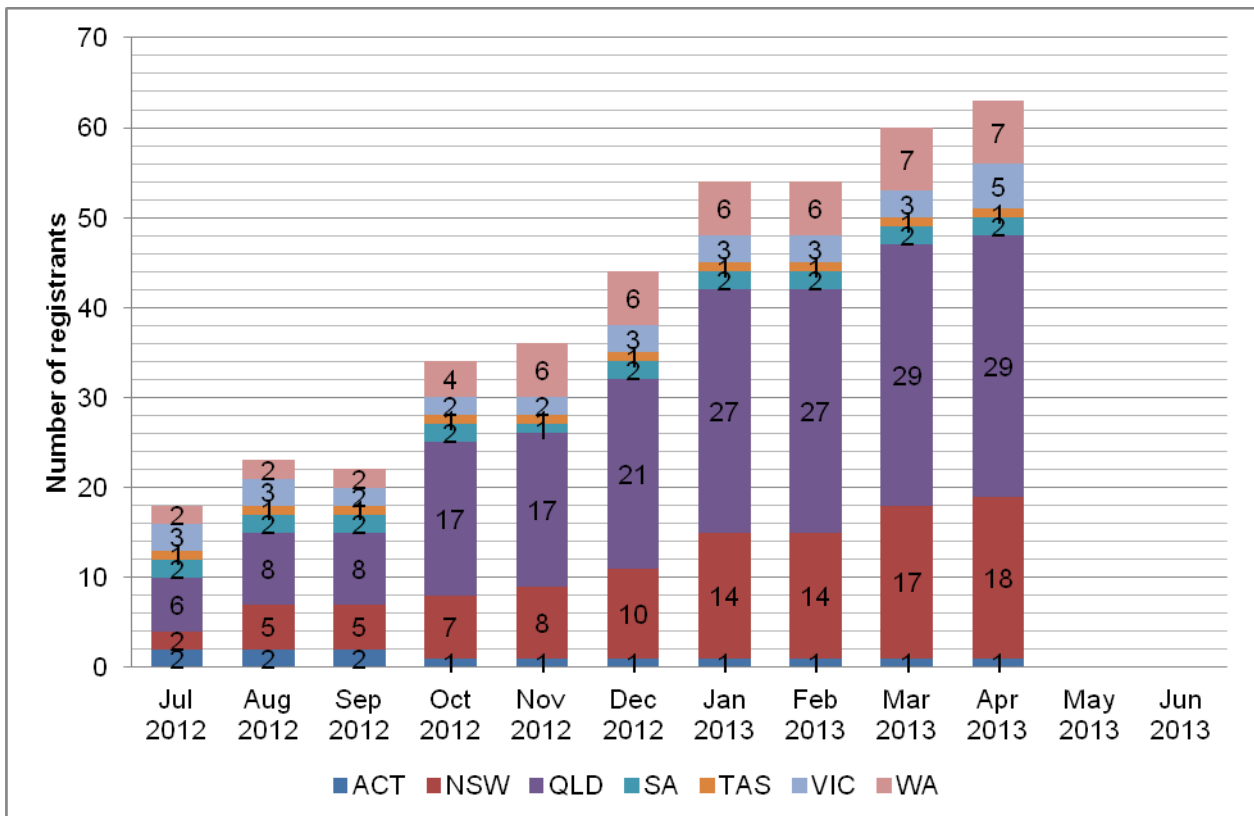
By the end of April 2013 there were 290 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners throughout Australia. This is 0.7 per cent increase from the previous month, which had 288 registrants.



Overwhelmingly, registrants practice out of the Northern Territory, with 227 practitioners nominating the NT as their principle place of practice (PPP). This represents 78 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% of practitioners nominating this state as their PPP. This is followed by New South Wales (6%), Western Australia (2%), and Victoria (2%).



Overview of registration applications

As May 2013, a total of 108 applications for general registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner have been received. Of these:

58 were granted registration
12 were incomplete
4 have been asked to 'show cause'
16 were refused registration
10 were withdrawn, and
the rest are under consideration.

Below is an overview of the principle place of practice of registration applicants:

PPP	Applications
ACT	0
NSW	24
NT	17
Qld	49
SA	5
Tas	0
Vic.	6
WA	6

Who should be registered?

Only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are working as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners **and** are required by their employer to use any of the following protected titles, must be registered by law. This group also must meet the Board's [registration standards](#) in order to practise in Australia.

The protected titles are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner
- Aboriginal health practitioner, or
- Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers who are not required by their employer to use a protected title do not need to be registered, and can continue to work using their current titles (for example, 'sexual health worker', or 'drug and alcohol worker', or 'mental health worker').

However, if an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker's job involves direct clinical care of patients, the Board highly recommends that they apply for registration in the interest of public safety. Registration is a way of ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

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.

What is a condition on a health practitioner's registration?

The Board, through its Registration and Notification Committee, can impose a condition on the registration of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner or student. A condition aims to restrict a practitioner's practice in some way, to protect the public.

Current conditions which restrict a practitioner's practice are published on the publicly available register of practitioners. When the Board decides the condition is no longer required to ensure safe practice, it is removed and no longer published on the register.

Examples of conditions include requiring the practitioner to:

- complete specified further education or training within a specified period
- undertake a specified period of supervised practice
- do, or refrain from doing, something in connection with the practitioner's practice
- manage their practice in a specified way
- report to a specified person at specified times about the practitioner's practice, or
- not employ, engage or recommend a specified person, or class of persons.

There may also be conditions related to a practitioner's health (such as psychiatric care or drug screening). The details of health conditions are not usually published on the publicly available register of practitioners.

What is a notation on a health practitioner's registration?

A notation records a limitation on the practice of a registrant. This is used by the Board to describe and explain the scope of a practitioner's practice by noting the limitations on that practice. The notation does not change the practitioner's scope of practice but may reflect the requirements of a registration standard.

Accreditation

The Board's Accreditation Committee continues to fine tune the draft accreditation standards and processes in preparation for its upcoming public consultation process. The six-week public consultation process is currently scheduled for the July–August 2013 period.

You can receive updates from the Accreditation Committee by completing the [online form](#).

Other Board activities

Developing new supervision guidelines

The Board approved draft supervision guidelines to begin consultation with its key stakeholders.

Establishing professional standards for this new profession is one of the Board's core regulatory functions. When finalised and approved, these guidelines may be used to define what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession.

After analysing the feedback from its key stakeholders and considering if further refining is needed, the next step is for these guidelines to be open to wide-ranging public consultation. The final steps will be to consider all the feedback and to approve the final version.

Strategic statement and work plan 2013/14

The Board approved its Strategic Statement and Work Plan for the 2013/14 period. This will be published on the Board's website.

Current consultations

From time to time the Board seeks feedback from practitioners, members of the public and other stakeholders on proposed standards, guidelines, codes and policies. We encourage your active feedback on these proposals, so please keep a watch of the consultation section of Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/News/Consultations. Past consultations are also accessible from this section.

Jenny Poelina

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

13 June 2013