

Communiqué

February 2017 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 about individual Board members can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The Board's most recent quarterly meeting was held on 22 February 2017, in Melbourne. The whole Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) almost monthly to consider registration and notification (complaint) matters.

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

February meeting

During its meeting on 22 February, the Board received reports from the RNC. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters.

Board vacancies

Every time a Board member comes to the end of their term on the Board, the vacant position is widely advertised in newspapers and on the website (www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au). All National Board appointments are made by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. More information is available on the [National Boards recruitment page](#) on AHPRA's website.

Urgent call for accreditation assessors

The Accreditation Committee would like to hear from registered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioners interested in being selected as approved assessors by the Accreditation Committee for the accreditation assessment teams that assess registered training organisations (RTOs) and programs of study against accreditation standards. If you are interested contact accreditation.unit@ahpra.gov.au or please call 1300 419 495.

First workshop on developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

At their combined meeting in September 2016, National Boards, AHPRA and accreditation authorities discussed how to best work together to support better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The goal of the workshop was to identify the National Scheme's strategy and role in ensuring patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples in Australia's health system.

The first workshop was an initial discussion to identify the goals and possibilities of action in a strategy. It is expected that a further, larger summit will be convened to ensure engagement and alignment with other efforts.

Review of registration standards

The Board has completed the preliminary 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 thanks all those trusted stakeholders who provided feedback in the preliminary consultation round. The next step is to consider the feedback, adjust the revised draft registration standards and guidelines as needed, and then publish them for public consultation, in 2017.

The Board is keen to get your feedback on the proposed draft changes to the registration standards (some changes are small, some are major).

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

Standards compliance audit

All health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), are required to comply with a range of registration standards.

These standards were developed after wide-ranging consultation and have been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Please refer to the Board's [registration standards](#) page for additional information and resources.

Last year the Board participated in an audit of registration standard compliance. In the coming months, AHPRA will again randomly select Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners to audit their compliance with the Board's registration standards.

An information pack will be sent to those selected for audit. Additional information is available on the [Board's website](#).

Health practitioner regulation: Learn how you're protected

A new video and an accompanying infographic explains the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website or read the [news item](#) on the Board website for more information. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

Annual report summary

The [annual report summary](#) provides a snapshot of our work regulating almost 600 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

A more details profile, encompassing data relating to all 14 National Boards in Australia, is published in AHPRA and the National Boards' 2015/16 annual report: www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016.

State and territory annual report summaries

Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Scheme is operating in each jurisdiction, have now been published.

Based on the AHPRA and National Boards annual report for 2015/16, the summaries are available [online on AHPRA's website](#).

Information includes applications for registration by profession, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, profession and specialty.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received by AHPRA by profession, types of complaint, matters involving immediate action, monitoring and compliance, panels and tribunals, and statutory offence complaints.

To download any or all of the state and territory reports, or to view the main 2015/16 annual report, [visit our microsite](#).

Employer obligations

If you employ registered health practitioners, you have an important obligation to ensure that they hold current registration and that you understand your mandatory notification requirements under the National Law.

AHPRA has published [resources](#) to help you understand and meet your obligations, which are designed to complement your recruitment requirements and processes. These materials state exactly what your obligations are and it is important that you are familiar with them.

Registration

Approved programs of study

There are now eleven programs of study that have been approved by the Board for the purposes of registration. More are coming on line as they are accredited and approved by the Board. The list of [approved programs of study](#) is published on the Board's website.

If you have any questions, please call the Board's Executive Officer, Jill Humphreys, on (03) 8708 9066.

Renewal of registration

The renewal of registration period ended on 30 November 2016. Under the National Law practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the register. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioner. The fast-track application process that could be utilised during January has now closed. Practitioners who have missed the renewal process should contact the Northern Territory AHPRA office on 1300 419 495. People who have missed the renewal process must not practice until their registration is renewed.

AHPRA sends renewal reminders to practitioners who have provided an email address. See below on how to update your contact details with AHPRA.

Top tips for using the register

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to all the work of the Board, as it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, we have developed [these tips](#). In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

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.

Security tip: keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards have made changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

If you use Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board's website and are experiencing difficulty accessing web pages and online services, the Board recommends you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience. Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

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.

For more information or help with questions about your registration please send a web enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

New Presiding Member

My term as Presiding Member of the Board has come to an end. At its February meeting, the Board elected Bruce Davis, practitioner member from Queensland to once again act as Presiding Member for a period or until Health Ministers appoint a Board Chair.

I have enjoyed my term as Presiding Member and will continue with the group described above that is working to develop a strategy for the National Scheme to improve the health outcomes of Australia's indigenous people.

Renee Owen

Presiding Member
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

28 February 2017