

Communiqué

May 2015 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 last quarterly meeting was held on 27 May 2015 at the AHPRA office in Darwin. Quarterly meetings for the remainder of the 2015 year will be held in the months of August 2015 and November 2015 in Melbourne.

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

End of grandparenting provisions

On 30 June 2015, the arrangements that allow some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals to become registered as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners will expire.

Those health professionals who have not yet applied for registration will be affected.

After 1 July 2015, the only way to become registered will be by completing an approved program of study, demonstrating substantial equivalence or doing an exam or assessment as required by the Board.

The profession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice became regulated on 1 July 2012 when it joined the National Scheme. Health professionals who were previously practising as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals are able to register with the National Board through the [Grandparenting standard](#) until 30 June 2015.

The intent of the grandparenting provisions was to ensure that health professionals who were legitimately practising before 1 July 2012 (particularly in jurisdictions that did not require registration) were not unjustly disadvantaged by the move to the National Scheme.

More information on the grandparenting standard is available on the [Registration standards](#) page of the Board's website.

The Board has received feedback from some registrants that their employers may be confused about requirements after the end of grandparenting, that they may need to upskill in order to retain their registration. This is not true. Anyone who is registered as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioner is not required to do anything before the end of June this year.

If you know any health workers who may be eligible for registration under the grandparenting provisions that expire on 30 June, please encourage them to register. After 30 June, all applicants for registration will be required to hold a qualification from an approved program of study. Approved programs are listed on the Board's [website](#). Holders of qualifications from non-approved programs of study will not be qualified to

apply for registration under the National Law¹ after 30 June. It is very important that anyone who is eligible for registration under the grandparenting provisions apply for registration before the end of June this year.

2015 planning

The Board conducted its planning for the 2015/16 financial year. Included in the work for this coming financial year is the review of the Board's core registration standards – professional indemnity insurance, continuing professional development and recency of practice. Letters have been sent to our stakeholders to ascertain views on the existing standards and to alert everyone to the forthcoming review.

Standards compliance audit

All health practitioners registered under 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.

Last year the Board participated in an audit of registration standard compliance. In the coming months, AHPRA will again be randomly selecting 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 the audit. Additional information is available under *Registration* on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sex abuse

The Board and AHPRA have been following the [Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sex abuse](#) and its implications for the regulation of health practitioners. The issues raised in the Royal Commission are serious and disturbing.

The Board and AHPRA are committed to learning from the evidence before the Royal Commission and its findings and taking action to make sure our regulatory system is responsive to anyone who has been sexually abused by a registered health practitioner, who comes forward.

If you have a concern about a health practitioner call:

- AHPRA on 1300 419 495
- New South Wales – 1800 043 159
- Queensland – 133 646 (133 OHO).

Revised criminal history registration standard in effect soon

The Board has published the revised [criminal history registration standard](#) – and supporting materials to help practitioners understand the new requirements before they come into effect.

This standard was developed after a review of the current standard and public consultation. It is approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

The Board's website will be updated with the revised registration standards in coming weeks. The standard comes into effect from 1 July 2015.

Registration

Current registration figures

The Board collects and analyses data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner registrations. The Board shares the data and analyses each quarter on its website.

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The data provided is:

- state and territory by registration type
- age by registration type, and
- gender by state and territory by registration type.

In addition to the above statistics, this communiqué provides stakeholders with an overview of specific data over a period of time.

The table below shows that by the end of March there were 342 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in Australia.

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	TOTAL
4	40	207	37	11	1	7	33	1	342

The overwhelming majority of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are in the Northern Territory, with 207 registrants nominating the NT as their principal place of practice (PPP). This represents 61 per cent of the profession.

New South Wales hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession with 12 per cent. This is followed by Queensland (11 per cent), Western Australia (10 per cent) and South Australia (3 per cent).

Top tips for using the register

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to all of our work because 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.

Updating contact details

To check or update your contact details, go to the online services panel for practitioners on the homepage of the Board's website and click on the relevant link. Enter your user ID, date of birth and password to access your account. Please note that your user ID is not your registration number. 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 – 5.00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

AHPRA uses Twitter to encourage greater discussion about National Board consultations and to host regular Twitter chats on important topics.

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.

Bruce Davis

Presiding Member

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

10 June 2015