

## Communiqué

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### August 2019 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 in Darwin in August, the third meeting for 2019. The Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) in between these meetings to consider registration and notification matters about individual practitioners.

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

#### Board meeting in Darwin

The Board was pleased to invite Iris Raye, Acting Chief Aboriginal Health Practitioner from the Northern Territory Government Department of Health to the meeting. As a trusted stakeholder, the jurisdictional government departments and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHO), education providers and others provide the Board with useful insight input and a wealth of knowledge to the development of our policies, registration standards, codes and guidelines.

#### Review of registration standards

I am very pleased to let you know that the review process of five of our registration standards has been completed, having been approved by the Ministerial Council on 30 June 2019. The [revised standards](#) come in to effect on 1 December 2019, in line with the start of the new registration year. The scheduled review has brought the registration standards in line with the expiry of the Grandparenting provisions of the National Law<sup>[1]</sup>.

The registration standards that have been reviewed are:

- **Professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements:** The requirements of this registration standard have not changed. The document is now clearer and easier to understand. All registered Health Practitioners must have adequate PII arrangements in place. Most often this is provided by your employer.
- **Recency of practice:** This registration standard sets out that the minimum amount of recent practice a Health Practitioner needs to do to retain their registration is 450 hours (three months equivalent full time) in the previous three years, or 150 hours (one month's full time equivalent) over the previous registration period.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

- **Continuing professional development (CPD):** The requirements of this registration standard have been made clearer. The requirement for an annual first aid certificate has been removed. Registrants must now complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD that is directly related to their chosen scope of practice (that is, what you do in your job), of which five hours must be in an interactive setting (e.g. online, with others, in a course). Registrants also need to maintain a portfolio that includes their planning, a record of their CPD activities and a reflection on their learning. CPD guidelines have also been published to support this registration standard.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:** Only those people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander may apply for registration with this profession. Two words only have been added to this registration standard. The existing registration standard requires someone who is applying for registration provides evidence of their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity through submission of a letter holding an official seal from the organisation supplying the letter. In the revised standard, the words 'if available' have been added because not every jurisdiction in Australia requires companies to hold a company seal. This change only applies to new registrations, if you are registered already, you don't need to give this information again.
- **English language skills:** Because only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People are eligible to apply to register with this profession, and only those who hold an [approved program of study](#) can be qualified for registration, this registration standard has changed to accept a qualification from an approved program of study as evidence of meeting the English language skills registration standard.

The [revised standards](#) come into effect on 1 December 2019. Until then the currently published registration standards remain in force.

There have been no changes to the [Criminal history registration standard](#).

### **Visit to the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)**

Before the Board meeting in Darwin, we were hosted for a tour at Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT). One of our (community) Board members, Karrina DeMasi, who works at AMSANT as a public health policy advisor arranged the visit. AMSANT's vision is to improve the health of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory through promoting and extending the principle of local Aboriginal community control over primary health care services to Aboriginal people.

AMSANT is the peak body for ACCHOs in the Northern Territory and advocates for equity in health, focusing on supporting the provision of high quality comprehensive primary health care services for Aboriginal communities. AMSANT run eight programs:

- public health
- continuous quality improvement
- digital health
- workforce and leadership support
- accreditation
- research advocacy
- social and emotional wellbeing, and
- NT Aboriginal Health Forum.

It is always great to see our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners in action in the many and varied roles they work in.



### Getting a notation taken off your registration

The Board wrote to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners earlier this year letting them know that the *condition* they had on their registration about medications would become a *notation*.

Some people, when they first registered under the (now expired) grandparenting provisions of the National Law, were able to register with extensive and relevant work experience and a qualification that may not have been accredited and approved by the Board. Some of the old programs of study did not include medications units so those people who studied these programs had a notation (and sometimes a condition) placed on their registration. A notation is a note which provides specific information to the public and does not affect a person's chosen scope of practice (what they do in their every day job). A *condition* is different from a notation on registration because it is something that you need to work towards having removed, often by a certain time. That is not the case for notations. Where the medications information was entered as a *condition*, it is these people's registrations where the information was changed to a notation.

Earlier this year the Board contacted people who had a condition on their registration to tell them that the condition was changed to a notation.

The notation is usually written as: 'Does not hold a qualification from a Board accredited education provider in the unit 'Work with medicines.'

Notations (and sometimes conditions) were first put on some registrations when the profession became regulated in 2012. Grandparenting provisions under the National Law have now expired and all programs of study are accredited and approved, including medications units, meaning these types of notations are no longer used.

If you have a notation on your registration and would like a it removed from your registration and the [national online register](#) you can make a submission at any time.

When removing a notation, the Board will consider a variety of evidence including, but not limited to:

- supervision reports focusing in detail on your demonstrated competence with medicines, and/or
- completion of upskilling or other training programs specific to medicines.

For example, if you completed a course, you can send in a certified copy of your certificate of attainment with your submission.

Having a notation on your registration does not affect your registration and you do not have to do anything about it.

If you have any questions or would like more information on notations and your registration, you are welcome to call AHPRA and speak to Amanda Grabyn on (08) 8901 8562 or Jill on (03) 8708 9066.

### **Brochures about the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners available for download**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners bring value to the Australian healthcare system by working to close the gap and make the system culturally safe. The Board has produced two brochures to help the public and other health practitioners understand this value. These brochures are available to download from the [Board's website](#).

### **[Why should we employ an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner?](#)**

### **[Why should I become an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner?](#)**

### **National Scheme news**

#### **Cultural safety training provider announced**

PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting Pty Limited (PwC's Indigenous Consulting) in partnership with Griffith University First Peoples Health Unit will deliver cultural safety training to Board and committee members as well as AHPRA staff. This appointment is the outcome of a competitive tender process. Cultural safety training is an important first step to ensure that AHPRA and the Boards are working to help health practitioners nationally understand their own connection to culture and unconscious biases, and how these are likely to influence their work.

AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher said the training is an important milestone and is part of the agency's commitment to support health equity for all Australians, which was publicly made by AHPRA and 36 other signatories in the National Scheme's [Statement of intent](#) last year.

'One of our strategic priorities is helping to embed cultural safety into the health system through our work with over 740,000 registered health practitioners across Australia.

'We want to be a regulator who deeply understands cultural safety and what it means for our work and we want to partner with others to build a culturally safe registered health practitioner workforce across Australia,' Mr Fletcher said.

National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group member and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia Chair, Ms Renee Owen, said everyone has a part to play to achieve health equity.

'We all have a responsibility to understand cultural safety so that we can work to eliminate racism from the health system and allow health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This training is an important step towards ensuring that the regulation of health practitioners is culturally safe', Ms Owen said.

This unique Aboriginal-led collaboration between PwC's Indigenous Consulting, Griffith University's First Peoples Health Unit and the [National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy Group](#) will provide a world class, bespoke cultural safety training program supporting the necessary culture transformation of Australia's health professions.

The training to be provided by PwC's Indigenous Consulting in partnership with Griffith University First Peoples Health Unit will be rolled out from the end of 2019.

### **Do you practise under the name published on the online register of practitioners?**

Governments recently consulted on possible changes to the National Law, which would allow the AHPRA and National Boards to include the names that registered health practitioners use in practice in addition to their legal name on the [register of practitioners](#).

The [register of practitioners](#), published online, is a vital element in supporting patient safety. Each of the 16 professions included in the National Scheme publishes the registration information of its practitioners which can be accessed by the public and employers. Included in this published information are the names of registered practitioners and important information about any limits or restrictions placed on the way a practitioner can practise.

The online [register of practitioners](#) must remain an authoritative and trusted source of information about health practitioners. Consumers rely on the public register for accurate and up to date information to help inform their healthcare decision-making and employers rely on it to validate their employees' registration status.

AHPRA and the National Boards understand that health practitioners may practise their profession using a name that is different from their legally recognised name that is published on the public register (an alias).

AHPRA has asked governments to consider changes to the National Law that would allow registered health practitioners to nominate one or more aliases to be recorded on the public register. Governments [recently consulted](#) on this, among a range of other possible amendments to the National Law.

AHPRA believes that recording additional names (or aliases) on the public register will help inform and protect the public by making it easier to identify a practitioner who may be registered but is not practising under their legal name.

There are some operational and practical issues that will need to be considered if governments make this change. A clear definition of an 'alias' is required to ensure practitioners' reporting obligations to AHPRA and the Board are clear.

AHPRA and National Boards will need to consider what information practitioners will need to give about their use of aliases in practice and whether any verification of this will be necessary to protect the validity of the public register. Finally, there may be risks of unintended consequences - including whether publishing aliases could be used for commercial gain or benefits that are not related to public information and protection, which is the focus of the National Law.

AHPRA and the Board will keep practitioners and the public informed of any changes to the law and reporting requirements.

### **Renewing your registration**

Have you renewed your registration? The registration period starts on 1 December each year and registrations must be renewed by 30 November. If you haven't renewed your registration yet, you're now in the 'late period' and you must renew now or you risk dropping off the register. If your name drops off the register, you may no longer use the protected title of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner.

Please call 08 8901 8562 if you have any questions or need help renewing your registration.

### **Are your contact details up to date?**

It's important to make sure 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 a junk folder.

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

### **Advertising your regulated health service**

To protect consumers, the National Law<sup>[1]</sup> includes provisions about advertising regulated health services.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).



The Board has recently included a [list of resources on the Board website](#) that you might find helpful for understanding and meeting your advertising obligations.

Advertising is actions by people or businesses to draw attention to their services. The ways people and businesses can promote services are almost limitless and include all forms of printed and electronic media.

If you are advertising a regulated health service, your advertising must not:

- **be false, misleading or deceptive**, or likely to be misleading or deceptive
- **offer a gift, discount or other inducement**, unless the terms and conditions of the offer are also stated
- **use testimonials or purported testimonials** about the service or business
- **create an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment**, or
- directly or indirectly **encourage the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services**.

If you're not sure you're meeting your obligations, or if you've been contacted by AHPRA about your advertising there are [steps you can follow](#) to make sure you comply with your professional and legal obligations.

For further details see AHPRA's [advertising resources](#) on their website.

### 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 Scheme please refer to the information published on [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 08 8901 8562.

### 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](http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

### Keep in touch with the Board

Call AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or 08 8901 8562 if you:

- 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](mailto:jill.humphreys@ahpra.gov.au).

Renee Owen

**Chair**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

1 September 2019