

Communiqué

July 2018 meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The Board meets face-to-face each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory functions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board.

Meeting with heads of occupational therapy schools in Australia and New Zealand

The Board met with all heads of occupational therapy schools in Australia and New Zealand in June 2018. The meeting was a valuable opportunity for the Board to discuss the release of the new [Australian occupational therapy competency standards \(AOTCS\) 2018](#), which will come into effect on 1 January 2019 and how the new standards will impact upon education providers. The Board hopes to continue this engagement with educators over the coming months, as the new standards take effect.

Australian occupational therapy competency standards (AOTCS) 2018

With the date of effect for the new competency standards fast approaching, the Board is undertaking work to develop additional resources to support practitioners, educators, students and the public to understand what the standards mean to them. The Board has also continued its engagement with Indigenous Allied Health Australia to understand what resources may be developed to support stakeholders to understand what it means to be cultural responsive and capable in occupational therapy practice.

The Board would keen to engage with you all about the new competency standards and what they mean for you. If you have any feedback on the new standards, please send through your thoughts to otboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au. Your feedback will further inform the work the Board undertakes to help occupational therapists understand and adopt the new competency standards into their practice.

Graduating soon?

Similar to last year, Julie Brayshaw, Board Chair will be hosting a one hour webinar for new or soon to be graduates about to embark on their occupational therapy careers. She will be speaking about the role of the Board and AHPRA, the registration process and obligations of occupational therapists; a Q&A session will follow the presentation. The webinar will take place in late September and details of the timing and date will be published on the Board's website. The Board encourages you to check into the Board's website to find out more.

Closing the gap by 2031: A shared commitment

The National Scheme has made a landmark commitment to helping achieve equity in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians to close the gap by 2031.

Nearly 40 health organisations have signed the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Statement of Intent, including leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, AHPRA, all National Boards, all accreditation authorities and other entities.

AHPRA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group is leading this work, in close partnership with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and experts.

The group shares a commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have access to health services that are culturally safe and free from racism so that they can enjoy a healthy life. To help achieve this, the group is focusing on:

- a culturally safe health workforce supported by nationally consistent standards, codes and guidelines across all professions in the National Scheme
- using our leadership and influence to achieve reciprocal goals
- increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' participation in the registered health workforce
- greater access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to culturally safe services of health professions regulated under the National Scheme, and
- increased participation across all levels of the National Scheme.

More information is available in the [Statement of Intent](#) and [AHPRA's Reconciliation Action Plan](#).

True partnership recognised through AHPRA and Victoria Police MOU

AHPRA and Victoria Police have announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enable greater cooperation which will see the public better protected.

The MOU is the first of its kind between AHPRA and a police force. It recognises the cooperation already in place between the two agencies. It establishes procedures for timely and appropriate information sharing, within the law, where AHPRA or Victoria Police discover certain information in the course of their investigations.

The MOU provides a mechanism for the release of information by AHPRA when it identifies information relating to criminal offences, including physical harm, sexual offending, production of exploitative material and/or drug offences.

Victoria Police will also be better placed to share information with AHPRA about practitioners who they suspect may pose a risk of substantial harm to the public or individuals posing as registered health practitioners when they are not.

The agreement lays out detailed security protocols around the transmission, storage, use and disclosure of information that is shared between Victoria Police and AHPRA.

The MOU recognises the learning that came from the [Chaperone Review](#), a report into the use of chaperones to protect patients. The report stated that where there are allegations of indecent or sexual assault there needed to be greater clarity around whether AHPRA contacts the police or relies on the notifier (the person who makes the complaint) to do so.

The report also considered it was important that AHPRA was kept aware of developments in police investigations, which may trigger the need to review risk and take immediate action on a registered health practitioner's ability to practise their profession.

For more information, see the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

Are your contact details up to date?

It is important that your contact details are up to date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your 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.

Security tip: keep your browser up to date

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.



Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and its expectations of practitioners on its website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au. Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policy and guidelines affecting their profession.

Julie Brayshaw

Chair

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

24 July 2018