

Communiqué

March 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.

Stakeholder forum

The Board met in Perth with representatives from education providers from WA, the WA division of Occupational Therapy Australia, the Occupational Therapy Council (Australia and New Zealand) Ltd and representatives from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This was a worthwhile forum for the Board to meet with a range of stakeholders and discuss matters of mutual interest. Amongst other things, the forum enabled participants to discuss accreditation issues, the new *Australian occupational therapy competency standards (AOTCS) 2018* and issues relating to student notifications.

Student notifications

One of the topics that was discussed at length at the Board's recent stakeholder forum was student registration and student notifications. The Board noted that there is some detail on the [AHPRA website](#) about the process for becoming a registered student, why students need to be registered, obligations of students to inform AHPRA of changes that may affect registration and what a voluntary notification against a student is. The Board is interested in exploring ways to improve the information that is provided to students about their obligations to AHPRA and the Board.

Public consultation on the draft revised registration standards

The Board has published a consultation paper on the following draft revised registration standards:

- Professional indemnity insurance arrangements
- Continuing professional development (including guidelines), and
- Recency of practice.

Public consultation commenced on 13 March and will close on 4 May 2018.

The six boards involved in reviewing core registration standards undertook research and benchmarking to inform the development of the standards. The summary is available to download here: [Summary of research to inform registration standards reviews](#).

The Board invites feedback from practitioners, stakeholders and the community. Written submissions can be provided to otboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au and you can download a 'Responses to consultation questions' feedback form from the [Board's website](#) which can be used to provide a submission.

Program accreditation

The Board approved accreditation of the following programs of study from the Gold Coast Campus of Southern Cross University until 31 December 2022:

- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, and
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours).

The Board approved accreditation of the following programs of study from the Port Macquarie Campus of Charles Sturt University until 31 December 2021:

- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, and
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours).

This decision was based on advice received from the Occupational Therapy Council (Australia and New Zealand) Ltd (OTC).

Scheduled review of accreditation arrangements

National Boards and AHPRA have started a process to consider accreditation arrangements from mid-2019, when the current term of assignment of accreditation functions ends.

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) sets out the accreditation functions in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme); these include developing accreditation standards, accrediting programs of study against approved accreditation standards and assessing overseas qualified practitioners.

Public consultation on the existing accreditation arrangements is expected to start during April 2018 for around four weeks. More information will be published on the AHPRA and National Board websites in coming weeks.

Read the full news item on the [Board's website](#).

Advertising self-assessment tool now available

AHPRA and National Boards have launched a self-assessment tool to help health practitioners, including occupational therapists and other advertisers check and correct their advertising so that it complies with the National Law.

The tool is easy to use and asks users to consider a number of questions about their advertising which can help them understand if it is in breach of the National Law. Advertisers' legal obligations are explained in the [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#).

The self-assessment tool is the latest in a series of [advertising resources](#) developed by AHPRA and National Boards. Advertising responsibly and within the law supports patients to receive accurate and reliable information about healthcare services that helps them make informed decisions about their healthcare choices.

The self-assessment tool is available in the [Advertising resources](#) section on the AHPRA website.

New research framework launched to improve patient safety

In January, National Boards and AHPRA published a research framework to help transform health practitioner regulation to improve patient safety.

[A research framework for the National Scheme: Optimising our investment in research](#) sets out the research priorities and principles for National Boards and AHPRA to focus their research efforts.

The framework includes the priority research areas of: defining harms and risks related to the practice of regulated health professions, regulatory taxonomy or classification scheme, risk factors for complaints and/or poor practitioner performance, evidence for standards, codes and/or guidelines, evaluating regulatory interventions, stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, work readiness and workforce capacity and distribution.

It has been published to provide a solid base to facilitate risk-based research and evaluation activities, with a clear focus on translating the outcomes of research into initiatives that will inform regulatory policy development and decision-making to maximise the public benefit.

Update on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

AHPRA, the 15 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: 'Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.'

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting, and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for AHPRA.

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 your junk box.

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.



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
27 March 2018