

Communiqué

16 August 2019

July 2019 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.

The Board met on 23 July 2019 at the AHPRA Office in Melbourne.

Review of registration standards

Following a scheduled review and wide-ranging consultation the Board, along with five other National Boards, has reviewed the following registration standards:

- *Registration standard: Continuing professional development (CPD)*
- *Registration standard: Recency of practice (ROP), and*
- *Registration standard: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII).*

The revised registration standards for CPD, ROP and PII were approved by the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Health Council on 30 June 2019.

The revised registration standards will take effect on 1 December 2019 to align with the renewal cycle and the current registration standards will be retired from that day. At registration renewal:

- in **November 2019**, occupational therapists will declare whether they met the requirements of the current registration standards, and
- in **November 2020**, occupational therapists will declare whether they met the requirements of the revised registration standards.

The revised registration standards are now published on the [Board's website](#). They apply to all registered occupational therapists and applicants at initial registration (except for the CPD standard, which does not apply at initial registration).

Overall, the revised registration standards make the registration requirements clearer, continue to focus on the protection of the public, and align where possible align with the requirements of other professions regulated under the National Scheme.

The Board is working towards a smooth and effective implementation on 1 December 2019. The upcoming August 2019 newsletter will provide information for occupational therapists about the changes to the registration standards and will encourage occupational therapists to familiarise themselves with these.

The Board invites its stakeholders to inform occupational therapists about the revised registration standards.

Australian Occupational Therapy Competency Standards

The [Australian occupational therapy competency standards 2018](#) (the competency standards) have been in effect since 1 January 2019. The Board expects all occupational therapists to understand and apply the competency standards in their practice.

To support occupational therapists in understanding and applying the competency standards, the Board has developed some case studies. The upcoming newsletter features a new section related to the competency standards and how these apply in occupational therapy practice.

Webinar for soon-to-be graduates

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 registered occupational therapists. This webinar will take place on Monday 26 August 2019, 14:00-15:00 AEST, followed by a Q&A session after the presentation.

The Board has invited students enrolled in approved programs of study to register for the webinar and the Heads of the occupational therapy schools have been invited to encourage students to participate in the discussion.

Board's Breakfast Forum at the Occupational Therapy Australia's 28th National Conference and Exhibition

The Board hosted a Breakfast Forum on Wednesday 10 July 2019 (7.00am – 8.30am AEST) at the Occupational Therapy Australia's 28th National Conference and Exhibition in Sydney.

This was a great opportunity to provide key updates on the Board's regulatory activities, including the review of the registration standards.

Latest registration statistics released

The Board released its latest quarterly registration statistics for the period 1 April to 30 June 2019.

For more information, including data on registration by age group, gender and principal place of practice, visit the [Board's website](#).

National Scheme update

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 Australian Health Regulation Agency (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 enable 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.

Advertising your regulated health service

To protect consumers, the National Law^[1] includes provisions about advertising regulated health services. The Board has recently included a [list of resources on the Board website](#) that occupational therapists might find helpful for understanding and meeting their 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 occupational therapists are advertising a regulated health service, their 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**.

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

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
16 August 2019

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