

Communiqué

August 2013 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 meeting was held on 30 August 2013 at AHPRA's national office at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne. This meeting was the first under the Board's new bimonthly meeting schedule. Future meetings for the 2013/14 financial year will be on 23 October 2013, 19 December 2013, 27 February 2014, 1 May 2014 and 26 June 2014.

Board decisions

Supervision guidelines public consultation

The Board has drafted guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and their supervisors. These draft guidelines will be released for a six-week public consultation period.

These guidelines may be used in a range of supervision arrangements, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners who:

- are returning to practice after an absence of greater than three years
- have had a significant change to scope of practice
- have a condition or undertaking requiring supervision from a health, performance or conduct matter, or
- have a condition related to adequacy of qualifications.

You can provide feedback through the [consultations page](#) on the Board's website.

Registration

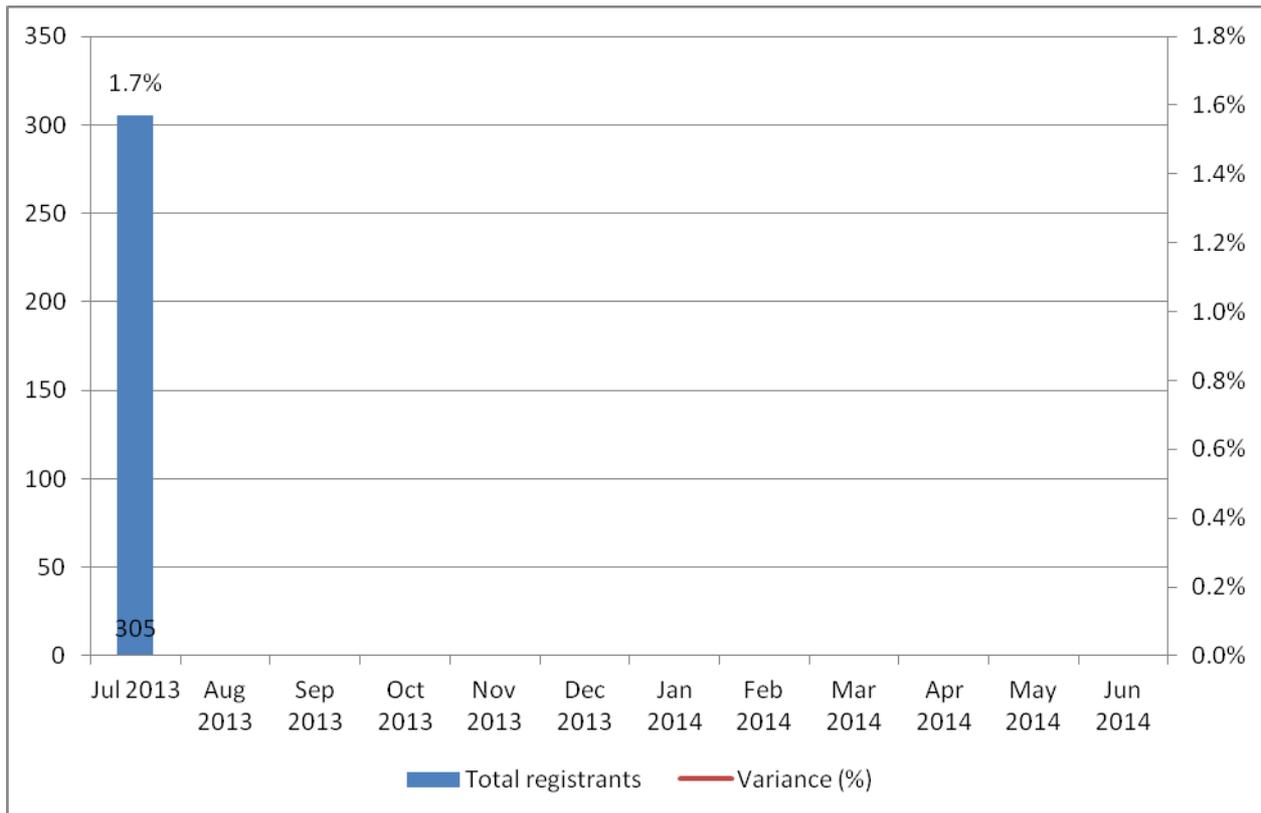
Current registration figures

The Board has analysed its registration data and produced a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants to share with the profession and community. The Board shares these breakdowns each quarter on its [website](#). The following breakdowns are included:

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

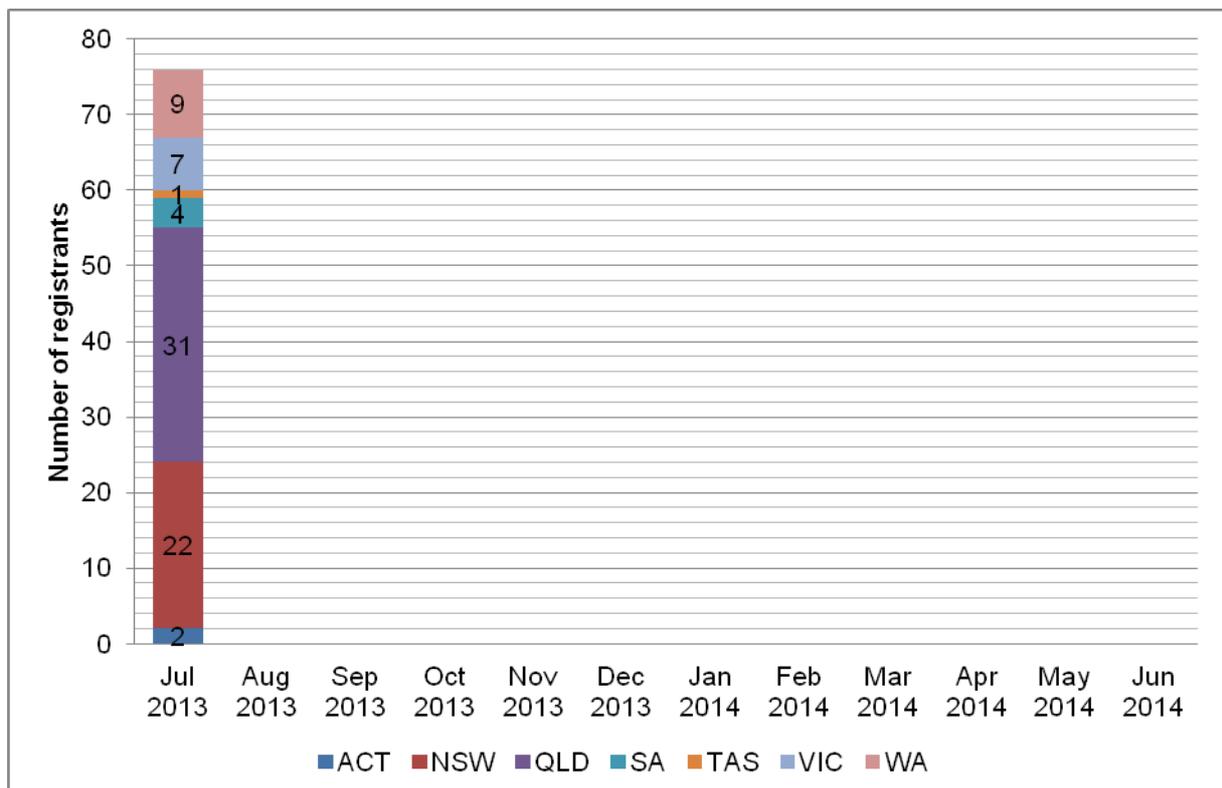
In addition to the above statistics, this *Communiqué* provides stakeholders with an overview of specific data over a period of time.

By the end of July 2013 there were 305 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners throughout Australia. This is a 1.7% increase in comparison to the previous month.



Overwhelmingly, registrants practice out of the Northern Territory, with 229 registrants nominating the NT as their principal place of practice (PPP). This represents 75% of all registrants of this profession. This is a 1% decrease in comparison to the previous month.

The number of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in other states and territories is illustrated in the graph below. As in the previous month, Queensland hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession, with 10% of registrants nominating this state as their PPP. This is followed by New South Wales (7%), Western Australia (3%), and Victoria (2%).

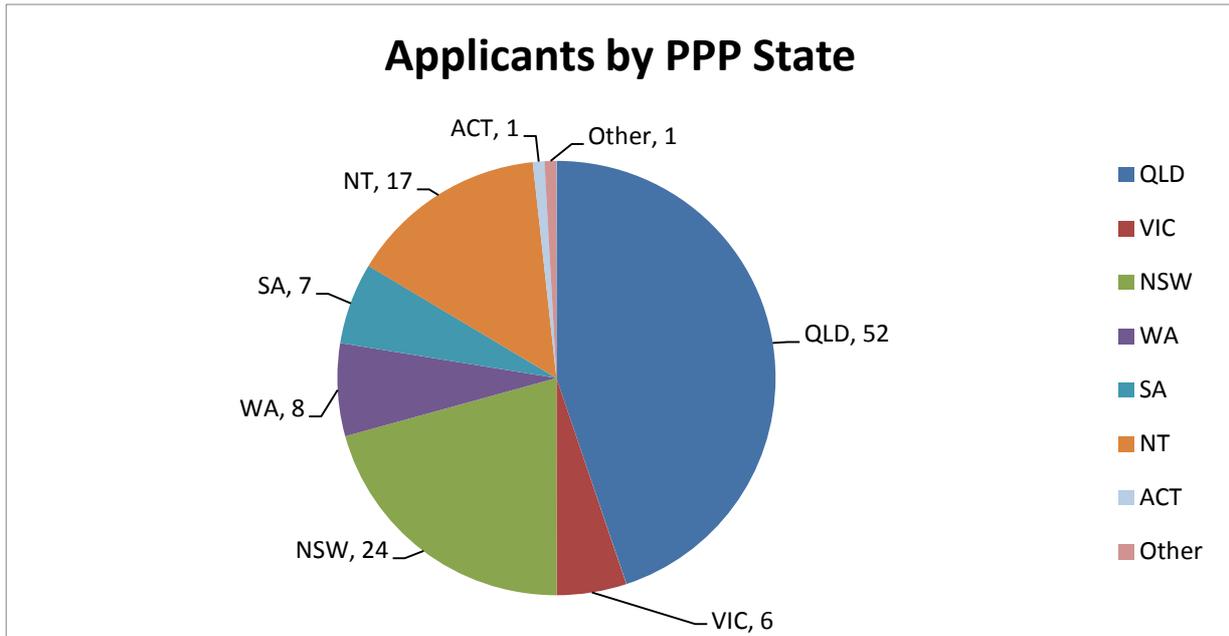


Overview of registration applications

As of August 2013, a total of 122 applications for general registration had been received. Of these:

- 70 were granted registration
- 15 were incomplete
- 1 has been asked to 'show cause'
- 17 were refused registration
- 14 were withdrawn, and the rest are under consideration.

Below is an overview of the principle place of practice of registration applicants:



There continues to be an increase in the number of applicants from South Australia. However significantly more applicants continue to originate from Queensland: accounting for 42% of all applications received.

No applications have yet been submitted by applicants with a PPP in Tasmania. One application has been received with a PPP in the Australian Capital Territory. The 'other' in the table above relates to applications made in error.

Of the 117 applications received, 75% have been from female applicants.

Who should be registered?

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), requires a practitioner to be registered if they wish to, or their employer requires them to use one of the protected titles. The protected titles are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner
- Aboriginal health practitioner, or
- Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

It is also the case that a practitioner may be required to be registered as part of their employment requirements, even if the protected title is not used.

The current wording implies that an employer must use a protected title for anyone performing the functions of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner. In fact, an employer may call a job anything they like, but if the employer requires the practitioner to hold registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner as a requirement of the job, the practitioner must be registered to

be employed. While the employer's requirements are not part of the National Law, it is another situation that may apply to a practitioner without using a protected title.

The Board's [registration standards](#) and application forms for registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner are available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Registration/Forms.

What is a condition on a health practitioner's registration?

The Board, through its Registration and Notification Committee, can impose a condition on the registration of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner or student. A condition aims to restrict a practitioner's practice in some way, to protect the public.

Current conditions which restrict a practitioner's practice are published on the publicly available register of practitioners. When the Board decides the condition is no longer required to ensure safe practise, it is removed and no longer published on the register.

Examples of conditions include requiring the practitioner to:

- complete specified further education or training within a specified period
- undertake a specified period of supervised practice
- do, or refrain from doing, something in connection with the practitioner's practice
- manage their practice in a specified way
- report to a specified person at specified times about the practitioner's practice, or
- not employ, engage or recommend a specified person, or class of persons.

There may also be conditions related to a practitioner's health (such as psychiatric care or drug screening). The details of health conditions are not usually published on the publicly available register of practitioners.

What is a notation on a health practitioner's registration?

A notation records a limitation on the practice of a registrant. This is used by the Board to describe and explain the scope of a practitioner's practice by noting the limitations on that practice. The notation does not change the practitioner's scope of practice but may reflect the requirements of a registration standard.

Accreditation

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee completed its public consultation of its draft *Accreditation standards and accreditation process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice* on 6 September 2013.

The Committee is now considering the feedback. The next step is for the Committee to propose its recommended accreditation standards and processes to the Board at its 23 October meeting.

If approved by the Board, the accreditation standards and processes will then be used to assess programs of study and the education providers that offer the programs to ensure that they produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to competently practise the profession.

You can receive updates from the Accreditation Committee by completing the [online form](#).

Sharon Milera

Deputy Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

27 September 2013