

Communiqué

Eighth meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

21 March 2012

At its second meeting for 2012, the Board continued to progress a range of issues relating to the registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and the proposed arrangements for accrediting relevant training courses and training providers.

This Communiqué aims to inform stakeholders and registrants of the progress in the work of the National Board.

Registration applications open

Registration applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners have now been open for over a month with application forms available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

The Board strongly encourages those practitioners who are required to register (see dot points below), but have not already done so, to submit their application form as soon as possible to enable processing to occur prior to 1 July 2012.

The Board reminds practitioners that:

- from 1 July 2012, practitioners must be registered in order to use the protected titles *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner*, *Aboriginal health practitioner* or *Torres Strait Islander health practitioner*
- if you are a registered Aboriginal Health Worker in the Northern Territory on 30 June 2012, you will automatically be registered as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner on 1 July 2012. You will need to be registered to continue working in a clinical role in the Northern Territory
- those people not in the Northern Territory who are required by their employer to use these protected titles will also need to be registered to continue working after 1 July 2012
- after 1 July 2012, those practitioners who are not required by their employer to use these protected titles will not be required to be registered, and will be able to keep working using their existing titles (e.g. *Aboriginal Health Worker*, *Drug and Alcohol Worker* or *Mental Health Worker*), and
- other practitioners who meet the Board's standards may choose to be registered but will not have to register by 1 July 2012.

Communication

The Board is continuing to work hard to inform registered and unregistered practitioners, and their employers, about the requirements of the National Law from 1 July 2012. Since the Board's February Communiqué, over 2,000 posters about the national registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners have been distributed across the country. The Chair and other Board members also continue to provide presentations in a number of forums. This work will continue in the lead up to 1 July 2012.

Update on guidelines

The Board considered feedback from its recent consultation on proposed guidelines on continuing professional development, recency of practice and grandparenting, and the content of these guidelines has now been finalised. These guidelines are now available on the Board's website and these should be read in conjunction with the Board's standards on these issues.

Accreditation

One of the key objectives of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners. The Board's accreditation function is the primary way of achieving this. The Board has agreed to appoint a committee of the Board to carry out its accreditation functions and the National Law defines the respective roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority. Stakeholder feedback on what the composition of this committee should be was sought by the Board between 27 January and 15 March 2012.

The Board has now considered the feedback it has received on this issue and agreed that the Accreditation Committee will consist of:

- an educationalist who must have VET experience in delivering the Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice);
- an expert in accreditation preferably within the health sector; and
- two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who are registered, or eligible for registration as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

The Board also agreed that, in addition to the 'core' Accreditation Committee, it would put together a list of people with relevant experience and expertise who can be co-opted to assist the Committee as needed.

The Board will be advertising for people with the appropriate qualifications and experience to fill these position shortly.

General matters

Further information about national registration and the registration requirements of the Board is available through the Board's website, www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au, or by calling 1300 419 495.

Peter Pangquee
Chair
21 March 2012