

Communiqué

September 2012 meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

Introduction

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board works in partnership with AHPRA to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The functions of the Board include:

- developing the national standards, codes and guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice
- approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study
- registering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and students, and
- handling notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings nationally¹.

Members of the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia were appointed for three years by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Members' details can be found at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/About/board-members.aspx.

Registration

By the end of August there were 276 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners throughout Australia. This is a small increase from the 271 registered practitioners in the previous month.

At the Board's Registration and Notification Committee meeting on 14 September, a further two registrations were granted.

Application forms for registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are available on the Board's website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au.

Registration renewals

Registered practitioners will need to complete a registration renewal form and submit it to AHPRA **by 30 November 2012**.

The renewal form will be sent to registered practitioners directly by mail closer to the date of renewal. Before that you will be provided with multiple prompts to renew on line if you have supplied us with your email address.

¹ *Except in NSW, which has a co-regulatory system where complaint/notifications are handled by the Health Care Complaints Commission*

Under the National Law, practitioners who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the National Register of Practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise in Australia until a new application for registration is approved. There is no discretion for either the Board or AHPRA in this, so practitioners must renew on time.

AHPRA staff across the country are available and ready to assist practitioners who are applying for registration. Call our customer service team on 1300 419 495 for support and guidance.

Other Board activities

Planning day

The Board will undertake an annual planning day on 17 October to develop its three year work plan within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Strategy 2011-2014.

Qualification review committee

The Board continues to be represented on the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council's industry reference committee to review the qualification, *HLT43907 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice)*, as part of CS&HISC's Changes to Packaging Rules of CHC08 and HLT07 Qualifications Project.

Projects

Health Workforce Australia has funded AHPRA on behalf of the Board to undertake a two-phase project on: (1) Registration Qualification Benchmarking, and (2) Safety Risk Assessment.

The first phase of this project is completed. It involved mapping the *HLT43907 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice)* qualification followed by consultation with a range of key stakeholders. The outcome of this work is that two groups of workers would be suitable for 'up skilling' to enable them to be eligible to apply for registration with the Board.

The second phase, which has just commenced, will involve assessing whether the public is at risk if Aboriginal Health Workers practicing in certain roles are not registered. The Board will soon release a discussion paper on this question as part of its public consultation process.

General matters

The Board has confirmed its meeting schedule for the remainder of 2012 as 18 October, 14 November and 12 December.

Further information about national registration and the registration requirements of the Board, including a series of frequently asked questions, is available on the Board's website www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au

Peter Pangquee
Chair
25 September 2012