

Chair's message

Welcome to the second issue of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia newsletter. The first issue can be found on the Board's [website](#). The Board will publish a newsletter twice a year to provide you with information on issues affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health profession.

In this issue we've emphasised the importance of renewing your annual registration by 30 November. The renewal feature includes an important message from the Chief Medical Officer of the Northern Territory, which is the principal place of practice for 76 per cent of our registrant base. Last year was the first year of national registration renewal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. Unfortunately, 40 per cent of registrants failed to renew their registration by the 30 November deadline. Those registrants incurred an additional late fee. This burden can be avoided.

We've also included some details on our newest Board member, Bruce Davis. Bruce is the Team Leader in

the General Clinic at Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns, and is the Board's practitioner member from Queensland.

We've also provided some details of our upcoming stakeholder forums, public consultation on proposed supervision guidelines, practitioner audit, and news from AHPRA and the National Boards.



Peter Pangquee

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

REMINDER: 2013 renewal due soon

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners across Australia are reminded that their registration is due for renewal **by 30 November 2013**.

We urge you to provide up-to-date email contact details to AHPRA so you don't miss the reminders to renew. Letters will be sent to practitioners who have not supplied an email address.

Make sure you renew your registration on time. The quickest and easiest way to do this is [online](#). Look out for your reminders from AHPRA because online renewal is now open.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners who do not want to renew their registration to keep practising can simply ignore the reminders from AHPRA or go online to 'opt out' of renewing. Using the 'opt out' service puts a stop to renewal reminders.

Renewal applications received by AHPRA **after** 30 November will incur an additional late fee. If you haven't renewed by 31 December 2013, your registration will lapse. This means you must make a new application for registration and will **not be able to practise** until your application has been approved.

Last year, less than 60 per cent of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners renewed their registration by 30 November. This means that a large proportion incurred an additional late fee. A month later, more than 30 practitioners were deregistered.

FAQ about renewal is available on the [Board website](#) under *Registration renewal*.

A message from the Northern Territory's Department of Health on registration renewal

'The Department of Health has recognised for many years that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are key primary health care professionals and lead the way in providing health services that are socially and culturally acceptable to patients and communities,' Northern Territory Chief Medical Officer Professor Dinesh Arya said.

In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners work as members of the health team, providing support to members of the community, doctors, nurses and other health professionals. They are usually the first point of contact at Community Health Centres and provide a link between the cultural practices of the community and health services operated by government or non-government organisations.

'Registration has been in place in the Northern Territory for these practitioners since 1985 and the value of this workforce has now been recognised nationally,' Professor Arya said.

'I would urge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners to renew their registration with the National Board by the end of November.'

Graduate applications

AHPRA is now calling for online applications for registration from students who are in their final year of an approved program of study.

Students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice who will be completing studies at the end of 2013 are urged to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. An email to individuals on the Student Register urging them to apply early and online will be sent by AHPRA on behalf of the National Board.

Applications can also be made by completing a paper application form. All applications, online or in hard copy, require students to post some supporting documents to AHPRA to complete the application. Students are encouraged to read the information on AHPRA's website under Graduate applications.

Graduates must meet the Board's registration standards and need to be a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner before they can start practising. New graduates are registered and eligible to start work as soon as their name is published on the national register of practitioners.

Snapshot of the profession

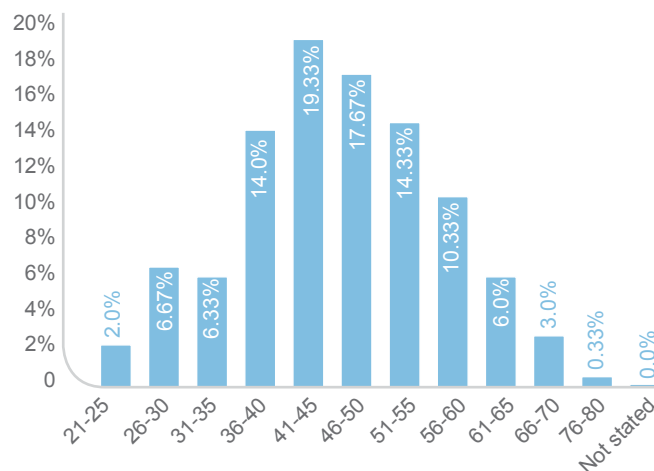
The National Board's latest quarterly data update shows there are 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners registered in Australia (Table 1). Of these, 228 (76%) are in the Northern Territory. The second largest number of practitioners is in Queensland, with 31 (10.33%).

Table 1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners: state and territory by registration type (June 2013)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners: Registration Type by State			
State	General	Total	% By State
ACT	1	1	0.33%
NSW	21	21	7.0%
NT	228	228	76.0%
QLD	31	31	10.33%
SA	4	4	1.33%
TAS	1	1	0.33%
VIC	7	7	2.33%
WA	7	7	2.33%
Total	300	300	

Table 2 shows the breakdown of practitioner numbers by age. Practitioners aged between 45 and 51 make up 37% of the total, with the next largest proportions being those aged 40-41 years (14%) and those aged 55-56 (14.33%).

Table 2 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners: percentage by age (June 2013)



For further details, visit the About>Statistics section of the Board's website.

Introducing Bruce Davis – the new practitioner Board member from Queensland

Bruce's family are Nyoongar people from Western Australia. Bruce grew up in Darwin, where he did most of his education and training. He now lives in Far North Queensland in Cairns and is currently working as the Team Leader in the General Clinic at Wuchopperen Health Service.

Bruce has been an Aboriginal health worker for around 18 years and has worked in many different areas and settings. During that time he has worked mainly for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, including Danila Dilba Health Service in Darwin, and Wurliwurlinjang and Sunrise health services in Katherine. He has gained invaluable experience and knowledge through his professional and personal development in these areas.

Bruce believes that there is a need for recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner skill set and capacity. Also, the standards of the profession need to be improved to bring all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners into parity across the nation. Bruce is looking forward to helping to develop standards, codes and guidelines for the profession.

Expressions of interest sought for list of approved assessors – accreditation

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee seeks expressions of interest from individuals interested in being included on a list of approved assessors for appointment to accreditation assessment teams.

The Accreditation Committee establishes accreditation assessment teams to assess education providers and programs of study against accreditation standards.

Assessment teams generally comprise two assessors:

- an assessor who is a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner with a sound knowledge of clinical practice and experience in clinical education, and
- an assessor who has a sound knowledge of education and experience in teaching and learning – this person is not required to be a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

Assessment team members may need to travel interstate to site visits and/or from time to time, to participate in Accreditation Committee meetings in Melbourne in person or via teleconference.

Costs for travel and accommodation will be paid. Assessors will receive an assessor payment.

For more information, including selection criteria and how to submit an expression of interest, please email Accreditation.Unit@ahpra.gov.au

Please feel free to pass on this information through your networks.

Supervision guidelines: public consultation

Your chance to provide feedback to the Board on its proposed supervision guidelines

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 in December.

These guidelines may be used in a range of supervision arrangements, including those for 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.

When the guidelines are released for consultation, you can provide feedback through the [consultations page](#) on the Board's website.

Stakeholder forums 2013/14

Your chance to have your questions on registration and accreditation answered and meet Board members

The Board is holding stakeholder forums around Australia over the coming nine months, and Board members, partner organisations and AHPRA staff will be present to answer your questions on registration and accreditation. The details for 2013/14 are:

Adelaide 23 October 2013

Sydney 18 December 2013

Brisbane 26 February 2014

Perth 30 April 2014

Melbourne 25 June 2014

Please contact us at ATSIHPBA-calendar@ahpra.gov.au if you would like to be on our mailing list to receive a formal invitation to the stakeholder forum closest to you.

Do you have colleagues who aren't yet registered?

HLT40213 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, in collaboration with John Pearson Consulting (JPC), has secured funding via Health Workforce Australia (HWA) and the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. The funding is provided to upskill Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers (or people in related roles), aspiring to be registered as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Successful completion of this upskilling training will enable you to apply for registration through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia.

If you already hold unconditional registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner, even though you don't hold the Certificate IV qualification, you don't need to upskill.

Training provided will be the qualification HLT40213 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice. All participants will be offered skills assessment and recognition of prior learning (RPL), combined with upskilling training where needed.

For more information call Batchelor Institute NOW! on 1800 677 095 or 08 8946 7126 or enquiries@batchelor.edu.au.

Please pass this information on to your colleagues who are not yet registered as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

This project was funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

Practitioner audit

Your self-declared criminal history statement may be audited

The National Law¹ allows the Board to check the statement you made about your criminal history in your application to renew your registration through an audit. The Board has agreed to begin an audit of the criminal history statements made by registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in 2013/14. An audit of the other [mandatory registrations standards](#) will start the following year.

News from AHPRA and the National Boards

Notifications guides published

In June, AHPRA published new guides for health practitioners and the community about how notifications are managed in the National Scheme². The [guide for practitioners](#) and a series of fact sheets explain to practitioners what happens when AHPRA receives a notification on behalf of a National Board. The information complements the direct correspondence that individuals receive if a notification is made about them.

The practitioners' guide clearly explains what happens after a concern has been raised about a health practitioner, who decides what happens, how AHPRA works with health complaints entities (on behalf of the Board) and what practitioners can expect from those processes.

AHPRA has also developed a guide for the community about making a notification about a health practitioner. This guide for notifiers, [Do you have a concern about a health practitioner? A guide for people raising a concern](#), will be an early focus for feedback from the newly established Community Reference Group for AHPRA and the National Boards.

Both guides are published online on the AHPRA and National Boards' websites in a wholly revised section on [complaints and notifications](#).

Community Reference Group

AHPRA and the National Boards have recently established a Community Reference Group, which had its first meeting in June 2013. This is the first time a national group of this kind, with a focus on health practitioner regulation, has been established in Australia.

The group has a number of roles, including providing feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge in the community about health practitioner regulation, but also advising National Boards and AHPRA on how to better understand and meet community needs.

Members are listed on the [Community Reference Group Members page](#) and communiqués from the group's meetings are published on the [Communiqués page](#) after each of its meetings.

Professions Reference Group

The Professions Reference Group was set up in 2012. It is made up of representatives of the professional associations for the professions included in the National Scheme, with participation from AHPRA's CEO and senior staff. Quarterly meetings provide an opportunity for AHPRA to brief the professions about its work and for the professions to ask questions about emerging issues relevant to regulation. The group also provides expert advice to AHPRA in developing a range of information for practitioners, such as the recently published [notifications guide and fact sheets](#).

By working with the group, AHPRA has also been able to establish a practitioner consultative group, made up of individual practitioners nominated by their professional association who are willing to provide feedback on proposals and systems improvements, to inform change and improve services ahead of large-scale implementation.

1 The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law)

2 The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

Keeping in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on the bottom of every web page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia).
- Address mail correspondence to: Mr Peter Pangquee, Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.



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