

Communiqué

February 2015 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 quarterly meeting was held on 25 February 2015 at the AHPRA National office in Melbourne. Quarterly meetings for the remainder of the 2015 year will be held in the months of May 2015 in Darwin, and August 2015 and November 2015 in Melbourne.

We publish this communiqué on our website. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Happy New Year

This meeting was the first of the New Year and the National Board would like to extend best wishes to all stakeholders and partners for 2015. This year is shaping up again to be a busy one for the Board.

End of grandparenting provisions

From 30 June 2015, the arrangements that allow some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals to become registered as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners will expire.

Those health professionals who have not yet applied for registration will be affected.

After 1 July 2015, the only way to become registered will be by completing an approved program of study, demonstrating substantial equivalence or doing an exam or assessment as required by the Board.

The profession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice joined the National Scheme and became regulated on 1 July 2012. Health professionals who were previously practising as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals are able to register with the National Board through the [Grandparenting standard](#) until 30 June 2015.

The intent of the grandparenting provisions was to ensure that health professionals who were legitimately practising before 1 July 2012 (particularly in those jurisdictions that did not require registration) were not unjustly disadvantaged by the move to the National Scheme.

More information on the Grandparenting standard is available on our [Registration standards](#) page.

Board decisions

2015 Planning

The Board conducted its planning for the 2015/16 financial year. Included in the work for this coming financial year is the review of the Board's core registration standards – Professional indemnity insurance, Continuing professional development and Recency of practice. Letters have been sent to our stakeholders

in recent days to ascertain views on the existing standards and to alert everyone to the forthcoming review.

Standards compliance audit

All health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) are required to comply with a range of registration standards. These standards were developed after wide-ranging consultation and have been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

Last year the Board participated in an audit of registration standard compliance. In the coming months, AHPRA will again be randomly selecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners to audit their compliance with the Board's registration standards.

An information pack will be sent to those selected for the audit. Additional information is available under *Registration* on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

National drug screening protocol strengthened

Mandatory hair testing for all registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment will now be routine in a move by AHPRA and the National Boards to strengthen the national drug screening protocol.

Under the protocol, all health practitioners who have restrictions on their registration linked to past substance abuse will have routine hair testing in addition to urine testing. Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug taking history).

National Boards will continue to make decisions about individual practitioners with impairment case by case, based on testing standards set out in the protocol.

The drug screening protocol is part of a wider, national strategy to effectively manage compliance and monitoring across the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The strategy has been progressively implemented from July 2014. More information is in the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

Registration

Current registration figures

The Board collects and analyses data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner registrations. The Board shares the data and analyses each quarter on its website.

The data provided is:

- 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.

The table below shows that by the end of December there were 376 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in Australia.

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
4	44	228	39	17	1	9	33	376

The overwhelming majority of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are in the Northern Territory, with 228 registrants nominating the NT as their principal place of practice (PPP). This represents 61% of the profession.

New South Wales hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession with 12%. This is followed by Queensland (10%), Western Australia (7%) and South Australia (5%).

Annual report

The 2014 Annual report of AHPRA and the National Boards reporting on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme has now been published.

The 2014 annual report is a comprehensive record of the National Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2014. This year for the first time, local summaries of the work in regulating health practitioners in every state and territory have been published. These summaries and the 2014 annual report are published on the [AHPRA website](#).

Updating contact details

To check or update your contact details, go to the online services panel for practitioners on the homepage of the Board's website and click on the relevant link. Enter your user ID, date of birth and password to access your account. Please note that your user ID is not your registration number. If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call 1300 419 495.

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

AHPRA uses Twitter to encourage greater discussion about National Board consultations and to host regular Twitter chats on important topics.

Conclusion

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners on our website at www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration please send a web enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Bruce Davis

Presiding Member

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

12 March 2015