

Contents

Message from the Presiding Member	1
Why register?	1
Who should register?	1
How do I apply to be registered?	2
Practitioner member vacancy on the Board	2
Review of registration standards	2
Standards compliance audit	2
Snapshot of the profession	2

National Scheme news	3
Performance reporting – a new era	3
Supporting graduates to register	3
National Restrictions Library	3
Community Reference Group advises the National Scheme	3
Choosing Wisely Australia campaign: five questions to ask your healthcare provider	4
Family and domestic violence – Queensland and Victoria state reports released	4
Keep in touch with the Board	4

Message from the Presiding Member

Welcome to the July 2016 newsletter of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the National Board).

The Board meets face-to-face four times a year, and almost every month all the Board members meet as the Registration and Notifications Committee (RNC), to consider applications for registration and complaints (notifications) about practitioners.

At our meeting in Darwin in May, we had the opportunity to pay a visit to the hardworking health practitioners in the Tiwi Islands. It was great to see some of our registrants at work and we thank them very much for showing us around.

The Board also had the opportunity to meet with the CEO and Corporate Service Manager of NATSIHWA (the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association). We're looking forward to forging stronger links with this body, particularly as the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners swell.

Lisa Penrith

Presiding Member, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

Why register?

Being a registered health practitioner gives you formal recognition as a member of a profession, and it ensures you have the right training to be a safe practitioner.

The primary role of the Board is to protect the public. It does this by making sure that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified are working within the community.

National Board members with staff of the Bathurst Island health clinic



Board members leaving by ferry after their visit



Who should register?

The Board's role is to make sure everyone is working safely in whatever job you choose to do (i.e. your chosen scope of practice), and not in telling your employer what job you should do.

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) is about protecting the public and ensuring that only those people with the appropriate qualifications and training are registered. The Board does not say what you can or can't do in your job. The National Law¹ protects titles rather than practice activities.

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.



This is a new profession, so not all employers have changed job descriptions and titles to include registered health practitioners yet. It is important to remember that you don't have to change jobs once you are registered. You also don't have to change the nature of the work you are doing, as long as it fits in with the definition of practice for a health practitioner. For example, you don't have to give injections or do clinical work just because you're registered.

You should register if you:

- meet the Board's registration standards, and
- hold one of these five Board-approved qualifications:
 - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
 - Marr Mooditj Training Incorporated (previously known as Marr Mooditj Foundation Inc), Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
 - TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice
 - TAFE NSW Western Institute, Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice, or
 - Health Industry Training, Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice.

More courses are being accredited and approved. Make sure you check the [Approved programs of study](#) page on the Board's website to see that your qualification is an *approved* qualification.

If you don't hold a qualification from an approved program of study, you may not be able to be registered.

How do I apply to be registered?

To become registered, you need to meet a number of [registration standards](#), which can be found on the Board's website.

Standards help ensure anyone receiving treatment from you is protected and receiving the best possible care.

Practitioner member vacancy on the Board

The Board members are appointed by the state and territory health ministers. There is practitioner representation and also consumer representation. At the moment there is a vacancy for a practitioner member from Western Australia.

If you know anyone from Western Australia who is a registered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioner, encourage them to apply to be a Board member and to help protect the health of our communities.

If you have any questions, please call the Board's Executive Officer, Jill Humphreys, on (03) 8708 9066.

Review of registration standards

The Board is getting closer to starting its review of registration standards in 2016 in conjunction with the other National Boards that started under the National Scheme in 2012. The registration standards that are being reviewed are:

- professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII)
- continuing professional development (CPD)
- recency of practice (RoP)
- English language skills, and
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioner registration standard.

The Board will send consultation papers to its stakeholders in the coming weeks for preliminary consultation. Then they will be recirculated and published on the Board's website (www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au) for public consultation.

The Board is very keen to get your feedback on the proposed draft changes to the registration standards (some changes are small, some are major).

In the meantime, the currently published registration standards remain in force.

Standards compliance audit

All health practitioners registered under 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 (Ministerial Council). Please refer to the Board's [registration standards](#) page for additional information and resources.

Last year the Board participated in an audit of registration standard compliance. In the coming months, AHPRA will again randomly select 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 audit. Additional information is available on the [Board's website](#).

Snapshot of the profession

The Board collects and analyses data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner registrations, and publishes quarterly updates on its [website](#).

The latest data update was published in May 2016. The table (over-page) shows that there are 570 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in Australia.

The overwhelming majority of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are in the Northern Territory, with 208 registrants (36%) nominating the NT as their principal place of practice (PPP).

Registration type by principal place of practice

Registration Type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
General	4	103	208	94	51	3	10	96		569
Non-practising								1		1
Total	4	103	208	94	51	3	10	97		570

New South Wales hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession with 103 practitioners (18%). This is followed by Western Australia (97 or 17%), Queensland (94 or 16%) and South Australia (51 or 9%).

Since December 2015, the previous update, there has been an increase of 12 registered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander practitioners in Australia.

National Scheme news

Performance reporting – a new era

We recently published our first quarterly performance reports, by state and territory, for AHPRA and the National Boards. The reports cover our main areas of activity; managing registration, managing notifications (complaints) and offences against the National Law, and monitoring health practitioners and students with restrictions on their registration.

The reports are available on the [AHPRA website](#). We invite your feedback on the reports via email to reportingfeedback@ahpra.gov.au.

Supporting graduates to register

Each year AHPRA receives more than 30,000 applications for registration from graduates of approved programs of study across the 14 regulated professions. Applying for registration can be an anxious time for applicants, with rigorous national requirements and deadlines. Making these processes easier to understand and comply with has been a big focus for us this year.

Improving the application process for graduates

We encourage graduates of approved programs of study to apply for 'pre-registration' online, four to six weeks before completing their studies. They must also post hard copies of documents supporting their application to AHPRA. We are trialling a new checklist and updated correspondence for graduates applying for general registration.

Our goal is to reduce the number of incomplete graduate applications received by our registration team and get graduates registered and practising sooner.

Mid-year applicants, who generally apply for registration around May/June, will be the first graduates to receive a revised and refreshed *Next steps checklist*. Improvements to the checklist include:

- better clarification about what hard copy supporting documents must be posted to AHPRA

- links to more helpful online information to help graduates gather and prepare their supporting documents in the required format, and
- a redesign of the checklist email so it can be printed off and the second half used as a coversheet to the required supporting documents.

The first half of the checklist email is kept by the graduate as a reference document that records their application number and outlines what happens next after AHPRA receives the supporting documents.

For more information, visit the [Graduate applications](#) page on the AHPRA website.

National Restrictions Library

Restrictions (conditions and undertakings) are a primary regulatory tool used to protect the public. Regulators place restrictions on registration as necessary in the course of an investigation and/or disciplinary procedure or as a result of a disciplinary procedure. Restrictions may also be imposed at the time of registration or renewal of registration, for various reasons.

A National Restrictions Library has been developed to provide a consolidated structure for common restrictions used across the regulatory functions of all of the National Boards and to support:

- consistency in recommendations from AHPRA to the National Boards and delegates
- consistency in the restrictions appearing on the national public register of health practitioners, and
- a best practice approach to monitoring compliance with restrictions.

More information about the National Restrictions Library, including a copy of the contents, can be found on [AHPRA's website](#).

Community Reference Group advises the National Scheme

AHPRA and the National Boards have a commitment to work with the community, and this has continued to grow over the past three years with the increasing involvement and contribution of our Community Reference Group (CRG).

Established in June 2013, the CRG meets quarterly and has a number of roles, including providing feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge in the community about health practitioner regulation.

We recently welcomed [six new members](#) to the CRG and we're looking forward to their contribution to the work of the National Scheme.

The CRG also has a new Chair, Mark Bodycoat, who has an extensive background in regulation and consumer affairs. As Mark says, 'The main objective of professional regulation in schemes like the National Scheme is maintaining public safety. To do this properly, regulatory schemes must be relevant, responsive and effective.'

Mark believes that community groups help to focus on issues of importance as they affect the wider community, and their input helps to ensure that regulatory schemes are focused on the right concerns. A body like the CRG provides a consistent channel by which issues of significance to the community can be heard and addressed.

To read more about Mark and the CRG, see the Winter issue of the [AHPRA newsletter](#).

Further information is available on the [Community Reference Group](#) webpage.

Choosing Wisely Australia campaign: five questions to ask your healthcare provider

AHPRA and the National Boards are promoting a new public awareness campaign. In March, the Choosing Wisely Australia campaign released 61 recommendations centred on the theme 'five things clinicians and consumers should question'.

The recommendations aim to help consumers start a conversation with their healthcare professional about the kind of healthcare they are receiving, including whether imaging and screening is necessary, when to use antibiotics and how to start a conversation on how to improve end of life and palliative care.

The campaign is part of a global Choosing Wisely healthcare initiative and the recommendations are the collective advice of 14 Australian colleges, societies and associations.

The Choosing Wisely Australia [website](#) provides a number of useful tools that you might want to share with your colleagues, friends and family including a fact sheet on '5 questions to ask your doctor or healthcare provider', which has been translated into 10 languages.

AHPRA has posted links to the Choosing Wisely campaign on Facebook and Twitter.

Family and domestic violence – Queensland and Victoria state reports released

The Board is committed to being part of the solution to major health and social problems as best we can within our mandate as a regulator of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession.

Everyone should feel safe at home. Tragically, many people across Australia face great danger at home from the people closest to them. Family violence can affect anyone, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity or sexuality and it not only impacts on victims, but also their family, friends and the wider society. Health practitioners who often work closely with families could also be in the right place at the right time to help families who fall victim to such violence.

The Board wants to make practitioners aware of two significant reports recently released on this issue, including one in Queensland and one in Victoria.

The Queensland Government commissioned a special taskforce to conduct an inquiry into domestic and family violence in Queensland. The Taskforce's report '[Not Now Not Ever - putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland](#)' made 140 recommendations to Queensland and national bodies, including three to the National Scheme.

In Victoria, the Royal Commission into Family Violence released its [report and recommendations](#) on how Victoria's response to family violence can be improved. The Commission's 227 recommendations are directed at improving the foundations of the current system, seizing opportunities to transform the way that we respond to family violence, and building the structures that will guide and oversee a long-term reform program that deals with all aspects of family violence. Though there were no specific recommendations directed towards AHPRA or National Boards, several referenced the important role the health system and health professional bodies have to play in influencing child safeguarding and in improving the accreditation and training for health practitioners in this area.

Keep in touch with the Board

Call AHPRA on 1300 419 495 if you:

- have any questions
- need help filling in forms, or
- are having trouble explaining to your employer about requirements. You can ask your employer to call this number.

The Board's [website](#) has information on [registration forms](#), [registration standards](#), [codes and guidelines](#), and [news](#). If you have already lodged your application, you may call the registration officer responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner applications directly on 08 8901 8527.

To contact the Board, please call Jill Humphreys on 03 8708 9066 or send an email to jill.humphreys@ahpra.gov.au.

