

Communiqué

August 2016 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 most recent quarterly meeting was held on 26 August 2016. The next quarterly meeting of the Board will be held in Sydney in November. The whole Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) almost monthly to consider registration and notification (complaint) matters.

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

August meeting

During its meeting on 26 August 2016, the Board received reports from its Registration and Notifications Committee. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters, including further work to finalise its budget for 2016-17.

The Board meeting was held to coincide with the annual National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting where entities within the scheme got together to discuss the focus for the next 12 months.

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

The Board participated in a workshop at the NRAS combined meeting to brainstorm what the National Scheme's role could be in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes. Discussion centred on what a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) could look like and achieve within the scheme.

Other participants in the workshop included AHPRA staff, members of the National Boards and representatives of other stakeholders involved in the regulation of health practitioners. Audience members during the RAP session included Reconciliation Australia CEO [Justin Mohamed](#). The Board was pleased to be involved in the RAP workshop and looks forward to further involvement in the future.

Board vacancies

Every time a Board member comes to the end of their term on the Board, the vacant position is widely advertised in newspapers and on the website (www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au). All National Board appointments are made by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. More information is available on the [National Boards' recruitment page](#) on AHPRA's website.

Board sets fees for 2016/17

The Board has announced the national registration fee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners for 2016/17.

The fee has been set at \$120. It will apply from 1 September 2016 and cover the registration period for most practitioners of 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2017.

A fee schedule, including the fee arrangements for practitioners whose principal place of practice is NSW, will be published on the Board's website.

The Board took a number of factors into consideration when deciding to lift the fee from \$100, including the resources necessary to allow the Board to meet its obligations in regulating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme).

The Board also wants to continue to help ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners understand their obligations under the National Law and the areas in which it may need to provide more regulatory guidance.

The Board will also shortly publish the Health Profession Agreement (HPA). The HPA provides information about the Board's financial operations, outlines the partnership between the Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), and the services AHPRA will provide to the Board to regulate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Review of registration standards

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

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

The Board recently sent consultation papers to stakeholders for preliminary consultation. After this round of consultation, the papers will be recirculated and published on the Board's website (www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au) for **public consultation**.

The Board is 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 need 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, the 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](#).

Health practitioner regulation: Learn how you're protected

A new video and an accompanying infographic explains the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website or read the [news item](#) on the Board website for more information. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

Profession profile

The Board has published a report of its work in the regulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners under the National Scheme during 2014/15. The report provides a profession-specific view of the Board's work to manage risk to the public. The data in this report are drawn from data generated in the [2014/15 year of the National Scheme](#).

Local data summaries from National Scheme

The National Boards and AHPRA have published [reports for each state and territory](#) on the National Scheme. They are for the 2014/15 year of the scheme. The summaries provide local data on registration types, notifications (complaints) and mandatory notifications for the regulated health professions, for each state and territory.

Employer obligations

If you employ registered health practitioners, you have an important obligation to ensure that they hold current registration and that you understand your mandatory notification requirements under the National Law.

AHPRA has published [resources](#) to help you understand and meet your obligations, which are designed to complement your recruitment requirements and processes. These materials state exactly what your obligations are and it is important that you are familiar with them.

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 March 2016 there were 570 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in Australia.

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	TOTAL
4	103	208	94	51	3	10	97	1	570

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

New South Wales hosts the second largest registrant base for this profession with 103 practitioners (18%). This is followed closely 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 health practitioners in Australia. The next data set will be published in coming weeks.

Approved programs of study

At its August meeting, the Board approved another four accredited programs of study. There are now nine programs of study that have been **approved** by the Board for the purposes of registration. More are coming on line as they are accredited and approved by the Board. The list of [approved programs of study](#) is published on the Board's website.

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

Top tips for using the register

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to all the work of the National Boards, as it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, AHPRA and the Boards have developed [these tips](#). In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

Are your contact details up to date?

It's important to make sure that your contact details registered with AHPRA are up to date so you don't miss reminders to renew or important information from the Board. You can check your contact details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website.

Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

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.

Renee Owen

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

5 September 2016