

Communiqué

November 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 23 November 2016, in Sydney. 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.

November meeting

During its meeting on 23 November, the Board received reports from its Registration and Notifications Committee. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters.

The Board was also very pleased to be able to pay a visit to the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service the day before the meeting. It was great to meet some of the team there and to hear of the work they do. We are especially grateful to Josh, Adina, Holly and Maree for taking the time to meet with us and show us around.

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.

URGENT – Call for accreditation assessors

The Board's Accreditation Committee would like to hear from registered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioners interested in being selected as approved assessors by the Accreditation Committee for the accreditation assessment teams that assess RTOs and programs of study against accreditation standards. If you are interested contact accreditation.unit@ahpra.gov.au or please call 1300 419 495.

Accreditation Committee membership

In October 2016, Ms Karen West resigned from the Board's Accreditation Committee to enable her to focus on her important work with her community. The Board thanks Karen for her time, effort and commitment to the work of the Accreditation Committee over the past 15 months. The Board will appoint a replacement for Karen – if you are interested in receiving information about this position please write to accreditation.unit@ahpra.gov.au.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The Board is pleased to be involved in the development of a National Scheme-wide strategy that seeks to improve patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Protecting the public is our primary purpose and, as a Board within the National Scheme, we are uniquely placed to make a contribution to this significant work.

The Board intends to use its platform to commit to practical and measurable actions that create meaningful opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

The Board looks forward to contributing to this work and will update you as progress continues.

2015/16 National Scheme annual report

AHPRA and the National Boards have released their 2015/16 annual report on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), providing a comprehensive record of the operations of the National Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

During the reporting period, the number of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners grew by more than 50 per cent – from 391 to 587. This was mainly due to grandparenting provisions expiring on 30 June 2015. These transitional provisions provided a pathway to registration in this new profession for existing practitioners.

The Board's independent Accreditation Committee continued to implement the accreditation standard and accredited two more programs of study, which the Board subsequently approved.

For detailed data and information relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia in 2015/16, please see the [2015/16 annual report](#). The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the Boards and highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

Supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance can also be found on the annual report website.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Expanded, profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

Review of registration standards

The Board has completed the preliminary consultation phase of its 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 thanks all those trusted stakeholders who provided feedback in the preliminary consultation round. The next step is to consider the feedback, adjust the revised draft registration standards and guidelines as needed, and then publish them for public consultation, early in 2017.

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 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 (the 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](#).

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 September 2016 there were 606 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners in Australia.

ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	TOTAL
4	113	212	105	54	3	11	104	0	606

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession has been the fastest growing profession in the National Scheme this year.

Approved programs of study

At its November meeting, the Board approved 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.

Renewal of registration

The renewal of registration period ended on 30 November 2016. Renewal applications received during December will not incur a late payment fee for this profession. Under the National Law practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the national register. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health practitioner. A fast track application can be made (only during January), however the practitioner cannot practise until the application is processed and the national register is updated.

AHPRA has sent renewal reminders to practitioners who have provided an email address. See below on how to update your contact details with AHPRA.

Top tips for using the register

The [national register of practitioners](#) is core to all the work of the Board, 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, we 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.

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.

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.

Security tip – keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards have made changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

If you use Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board's website and are experiencing difficulty accessing web pages and online services, the Board recommends you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience. Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

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

8 December 2016