

Communiqué

November 2017 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 22 November 2017, in Sydney. The whole Board meets as the Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) in between these meetings 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 22 November, the Board received reports from the RNC. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters.

Visit to Barangaroo

In conjunction with the November Board meeting, the Board visited Barangaroo – the new 22 hectare historically significant site, nestled between Sydney Harbour and the bustling Sydney streets. It is intended as a showcase of international design excellence, leading technologies, world-class sustainability, public art and cultural programs. It includes an entirely Australian native garden, and is named after powerful Cammeraygal woman, Barangaroo. As an Aboriginal leader at the time of European colonisation, Barangaroo was a key figure in the local Aboriginal community. Her legacy lives on in the cultural significance of Barangaroo the place. The Gadigal people of the Eora nation were the traditional custodians of this land, using it for hunting, the harbour for fishing and the foreshore as a place of congregation.

Today, Aboriginal contemporary culture is celebrated at Barangaroo through artworks, events and commemorations, including NAIDOC week and the popular Blak Markets. On January 26 each year, the WugulOra morning ceremony acknowledges Australia's shared history and the traditional custodians.

The Board was delighted to be shown around by Clarence Slockee, in a hands-on educational tour. We are very thankful to have spent some time around this culturally significant site by such an enthusiastic and learned custodian.

Update on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

In our last communiqué, we told you about the beginning of the National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA, the 14 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: 'Patient safety for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.'

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

The group met for the second time in November. The goal of the meeting was to finalise key documents and to report on initiatives and working groups that have been active since the June meeting, including an update on the feedback provided to the Accreditation Systems Review by members of the group. This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a draft Reconciliation Action Plan for AHPRA.

The next meeting is scheduled for February or March 2018.

Review of registration standards

Once again, we report to you that 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 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 registration standard.

The next phase of the process is public consultation and we will seek the feedback of all interested parties, as well as those trusted stakeholders who gave us useful feedback during the preliminary consultation phase.

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.

Further approved programs of study added to the list of qualifications

At its November meeting, the Board added another two courses to its list of Approved Programs of Study on the website of qualifications that are approved for the purposes of registration. Accreditation of courses ensures that the education and training leading to registration as a health practitioner is rigorous and prepares the graduates to practise a health profession safely. Only when a program of study is listed on the Board's website is it approved for the purposes of registration.

There are now 14 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.

Call for Accreditation Committee members

The Accreditation Committee of the Board will shortly be seeking expressions of interest from registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners and others with appropriate accreditation experience to join as members. Under its [Terms of Reference](#), the Accreditation Committee is responsible for the development of accreditation standards and to submit these to the Board for approval and, where an education provider applies for accreditation against the standards, to assess both the education provider and the relevant programs of study. This committee is not responsible for setting registration standards, registering health practitioners, or investigating complaints about health practitioners.

Registration renewal reminder

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners who have yet to renew their registration are now in the late renewal period and have until 31 December to apply to renew. Applications received in December will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee. Practitioners who apply after 1 January must lodge a new application for registration.

Anyone who does not apply to renew their registration by 31 December 2017 will have lapsed registration. They will be removed from the national [Register of practitioners](#), their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise in Australia.

A 'fast-track' application can be made, but you cannot practise until it is processed and the national register is updated, which can take time.

If you apply to renew during the late renewal period you can still practise even if:

- we are still processing your application to renew, and/or
- the registration expiry date displayed on the register has passed.

Renewing your registration includes an extra step this year

When completing your renewal, you will be asked to check that your qualification(s) are recorded correctly on the online [national register of practitioners](#).

We are including this as part of online renewal to make it easy for you to confirm and update these details if required. You will be helping us to maintain the integrity of the national register, which helps to protect the public.

Useful information is on the [Registration renewal](#) page of the Board's website.

Graduate applications are open online

AHPRA is now calling for final-year students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice to apply for registration online.

Those on the Student Register who will complete their [approved program of study](#) at the end of 2017 have been sent an email inviting them to [apply online](#) for registration four to six weeks before finishing their course.

Students are encouraged to read the information on AHPRA's website under [Graduate applications](#). Certain applicants will also need to apply for an [international criminal history check](#).

Graduates can start practising as soon as their name is published on the [national register](#).

Review of the Code of Conduct

The Board's *Code of Conduct* (the Code) is also used by ten other National Boards (Chinese Medicine, Chiropractic, Dental, Medical Radiation Practice, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Osteopathy, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Podiatry), with some minor profession-specific changes for some Boards.

The Code is a regulatory document that provides an overarching guide to support and inform good practice and to help practitioners, National Boards, employers, health care users and other stakeholders to understand what good practice involves. It seeks to help and support practitioners to deliver safe and effective health services in an ethical framework.

As the Code was last published in March 2014, the Board has started a scheduled review with other National Boards that use the Code, which will draw on best available research and data and involve additional stakeholder consultation and engagement.

The review is still at an early phase and has not yet been release for consultation. However, the Board is already considering how it can maximise opportunities for input when the consultation stage of the review

starts. In addition to public consultation, the Board intends to use its website and social media to inform the profession of how it can contribute to the review.

The Board will highlight opportunities to be involved in upcoming communiqué and newsletters.

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.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners on its [website](#). Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health Practitioners.

Call AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or 08 8901 8527 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.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



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.

Renee Owen

Presiding Member

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

12 December 2017