

Communiqué

February 2018 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 are currently being updated and can be found on the Board's [website](#).

The Board's most recent quarterly meeting was held on 21st February 2018, in Melbourne. This was the first meeting for 2018. 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.

February meeting

The February Board meeting was the first meeting for four new members. Members were appointed by Australia's Health Ministers. The Board refreshed its membership last year in accordance with the requirements of the National Law¹.

The Board welcomed the following members to their first term:

- Bonny King, practitioner member from NT
- Margaret McCallum, community member
- Leanne Quirino, practitioner member from South Australia, and
- Kym Schnellnegger, practitioner member from NSW

Members reappointed to the Board by Health Ministers for another term are:

- Renee Owen, Chair and practitioner member from Victoria
- Bruce Brown, community member
- Karrina DeMasi, community member
- Celia Harnas, practitioner member from WA

The Board also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters at its February meeting.

Queensland practitioner vacancy on the Board

There is a vacancy on the Board for a registered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner from Queensland.

Serving on the Board is an exciting opportunity to play a key role in protecting people in our communities through the regulation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health profession.

The successful applicant will be appointed by Australian Health Ministers

More information about the vacancy and how to apply is on the [Board's website](#).

Call for Accreditation Committee members

The Accreditation Committee of the Board is currently 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.

Latest registration data published

Nearly 650 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners are now registered with the Board. The majority are based in the Northern Territory, New South Wales and in Queensland.

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 15 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.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for AHPRA.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2018.

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

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.

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

Further approved programs of study added to the list of qualifications

At its February meeting, the Board added another course 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 an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 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 15 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.

New research framework launched to improve patient safety

In January, National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) published a research framework to help transform health practitioner regulation to improve patient safety.

[A research framework for the National Scheme: Optimising our investment in research](#) sets out the research priorities and principles for National Boards and AHPRA to focus their research efforts.

The framework includes the priority research areas of: defining harms and risks related to the practice of regulated health professions, regulatory taxonomy or classification scheme, risk factors for complaints and/or poor practitioner performance, evidence for standards, codes and/or guidelines, evaluating regulatory interventions, stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, work readiness and workforce capacity and distribution.

It has been published to provide a solid base to facilitate risk-based research and evaluation activities, with a clear focus on translating the outcomes of research into initiatives that will inform regulatory policy development and decision-making to maximise the public benefit.

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.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on www.ahpra.gov.au. Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495 or (08) 8901 8527.

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 [the Board's website](#) and the [AHPRA website](#).

Keep in touch with the Board

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.

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

Renee Owen

Chair

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia

28 February 2018

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