

Communiqué

Meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

26 March 2013

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Managing the impaired practitioner

National Boards are required to assess the risk to the public that a practitioner with an impairment may pose and if necessary to take steps to monitor their health and/or restrict their practice.

The National Law defines impairment *as a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder (including substance abuse or dependence) that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect the person's capacity to practise the profession.*

The National Law gives the Boards a range of powers in relation to the assessment and management of impaired practitioners. Boards can for example:

- ask practitioners to undergo a health assessment to determine whether they are impaired
- take immediate action if they believe that because of a practitioner's health, they pose a serious risk to persons and it is necessary to take immediate action to protect public health or safety
- impose conditions
- accept undertakings
- caution a practitioner
- refer a practitioner to a health panel
- refer a practitioner to a tribunal.

Based on the provisions of the National Law the steps involved in the assessment and management of impaired practitioners are being refined, to encourage consistency in how cases are managed across the National Scheme. This work is being lead by the Medical Board of Australia and will result in a resource for all Boards to consider, in relation to their profession and the different risks posed by a practitioner's practice.

Practitioner breakfast forums

The Board held its first 2013 practitioner breakfast forum in Brisbane, directly before its March Board meeting. The event was well attended and provided an opportunity for practitioners to meet Board members, to hear how the integration of registration standards, codes and guidelines can be incorporated into daily practice and to ask questions.

The next breakfast forum is scheduled for 27 May in Perth, with subsequent events proposed for Adelaide (July) and Sydney (October). Event and RSVP details will be published to the website and emailed to registered practitioners.

Chairperson

Dr Mary Russell
26 March 2013