



Communiqué

Meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia May 2014

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).

The Board meets face to face each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board.

Advertising Guidelines: update

The National Board has acted on feedback received about the *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services (Advertising guidelines)* that were released in March and has published an update. This update is available in the [Codes and guidelines](#) tab on the National Board's website.

Anyone who advertises a regulated health service must meet the requirements of the National Law. This includes registered health practitioner, individuals who are not health practitioners and businesses.

No requirements have been added from the previous version. Instead the updated guidelines clarify:

- that under the National Law, testimonials are not allowed when advertising a regulated health service, or
- the obligations of the National Law about advertising only apply when a regulated health service is being advertised, or
- the National Law is not intended to stop members of the community and patients from discussing their experiences online or in person.

The National Board would like to thank everyone who provided feedback on the guidelines. Whenever possible, this feedback was taken in to account and used to update the guidelines.

Much of the feedback that was received was about the ban on using testimonials in advertising a regulated health service. This is a requirement of the National Law, which is something National Boards are required to implement. The [terms of reference](#) for the scheduled review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the scheme regulating registered health practitioners in Australia) include a point relating to advertising, and interested members of the public and health practitioners are able to provide feedback about the legislation. More information is available on the [AHMAC website](#).

Occupational therapy practitioner audit

An audit page has been published on our website under the [Registration](#) tab to keep occupational therapists informed and to provide information and tools to help practitioners who are selected for audit in 2014.

AHPRA and the National Boards have developed a nationally consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards.

Audits are an important part of the way for occupational therapists to demonstrate to the community and to the Board that they are meeting the mandatory registration standards.

Under the National Law, AHPRA (on behalf of the Board) can request you to provide evidence that you meet the standards, as declared in your previous annual statement. Your annual statement is made when you apply to renew your registration. It is supported by a declaration confirming that it is 'true and correct'.

The annual statement also includes whether:

- you have met the recency of practice requirements stated in the Board's registration standard
- you met the Board's continuing professional development (CPD) requirements during the previous registration period
- you have practised in accordance with the requirements of the Board's professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements registration standard, and whether you commit to practise in accordance with that registration standard if your registration is renewed; and
- if there was any change in your criminal history during the previous registration period and whether you have any other criminal history that has not been disclosed to AHPRA.

How will I know if I am being audited?

Audits of random samples of occupational therapists will occur periodically throughout the year.

If you are selected for audit, you will receive an audit notice in the mail from AHPRA. It includes a checklist that outlines what supporting documentation is required to demonstrate that you meet the standard(s) being audited.

What is being audited?

Each time you apply to renew your registration, you make a declaration that you have (or have not) met the registration standards for your profession. The audit requires that you provide further information to support your declarations.

Your audit notice letter will identify which standards are being audited.

All of these standards are published on the Board's website under the [Registration standards](#) tab.

AHPRA update

Three year review

The Australian Health Ministers' Workforce Council has published the terms of reference for the three-year review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Kim Snowball has been appointed to independently lead the review. Kim has held a variety of senior leadership roles in both public and private health sectors.

The full terms of reference for the review are [available here](#). But in short the three-year review will examine:

- the extent to which AHPRA and National Boards are meeting the objectives and guiding principles of the National Scheme
- the operational performance of the National Scheme
- the National Law, including mandatory reporting, the Australian Health Workforce Advisory Council and new professions entering the scheme
- governance effectiveness, including within the National Scheme and with our key stakeholders
- the sustainability of the National Scheme, with specific focus on new professions in the Scheme and funding for smaller professions.

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

If you were in the Twittersphere in late March 2014, you may have noted that AHPRA joined the conversation. Less than two weeks into AHPRA's social media journey, the CEO Martin Fletcher ran a live chat #AHPRAqanda.

The chat included nearly 60 participants, and AHPRA tweeted 99 times in the hour. If you missed it, see the chat archive from the [Twitter chat with AHPRA CEO page](#) on the AHPRA website.

AHPRA decided to hold the chat to respond to the online conversations about the National Board advertising guidelines, which gained momentum on Twitter with a number of practitioners and members of the community.

AHPRA will regularly host twitter chats about important topics, and will use this forum to try and get more feedback to National Board consultations.

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of you as an occupational therapists on our website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or questions about your registration, please send an online enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Chair



Dr Mary Russell
Occupational Therapy Board of Australia