



Communiqué

Meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

July 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.

New and reappointed Chair and Board members of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

Health Ministers announced the new and reappointed Chair and Board members of the Occupational Therapy Board in June 2014. I have been reappointed as Chair of the Board for a second term from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017. Mr James Carmichael (practitioner member from Queensland), Ms Julie Brayshaw (practitioner member from Western Australia), Dr Katherine Moore (practitioner member from New South Wales), Ms Louisa Scott (Community member) and Ms Terina Saunders (practitioner member from the Northern Territory) have also been reappointed for another term.

The new appointments and reappointments are the result of the inaugural terms ending for members appointed by the Ministerial Council in 2011.

The Board extends very sincere thanks to all outgoing and previous Board members for their dedication to and work on the National Scheme and for their contribution to the safety of the public by ensuring access to health practitioners who are safe and adequately trained and qualified. They are:

- Mr Andrew Taylor (Queensland)
- Ms Amanda Bladen (Victoria)

The new Board members who were welcomed from 1 July 2014 are:

- Ms Katheleen MacRae appointed as a practitioner member from Victoria for a period of 3 years from 1 July 2014
- Ms Roxane Shaw appointed as a community member for a period of 3 years from 1 July 2014.

OTBA practitioner audit webinar

On 21 July 2014, I presented a webinar entitled 'Staying up to standard', which was attended by more than 900 of you across two sessions – a wonderful response. In the presentation, I recapped the registration standards for occupational therapy, provided tips and templates for keeping CPD records and portfolios, and gave an overview of the evidence you'll need to provide if you are audited.

A recording of the webinar is available here: [Staying up to Standard](#)

The recording includes 17 questions submitted by webinar participants during the two sessions, and my answers to these. There were many more questions sent to us than we had time to answer in the webinar, but responses to them will appear on the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) our website over the coming weeks.

On behalf of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, I'd like to thank those of you who participated in the live webinar.

Have your say: National Boards consult on practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases

All 14 National Boards are inviting practitioners, members of the community and other stakeholders to provide feedback on guidelines that will determine how, from a regulatory perspective, health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases should be managed.

Under the proposed guidelines, registered health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases must comply with the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA) guidelines on this issue to ensure their practice does not compromise patient safety.

The CDNA offers strategic advice to governments and other key bodies on public health actions to minimise the impact of communicable diseases, and their *Australian National Guidelines for the Management of Health Care Workers known to be infected with blood-borne viruses* are endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council.

The National Boards' proposed guidelines allow health practitioners infected with a blood-borne virus to practise their profession if they comply with the CDNA guidelines. However, they may have to modify their practice. For example, they will not be able to perform certain procedures such as exposure-prone procedures if the CDNA guidelines stop them from doing so.

The current CDNA guidelines define an exposure prone procedure as a procedure where there is a risk of injury to the healthcare worker resulting in exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the worker. These procedures include those where the worker's hands (whether gloved or not) may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times.

The National Boards have published a [consultation paper](#) to support the draft guidelines. The consultation is open until 26 September 2014.

Queensland – new arrangements for handling notifications from 1 July 2014

From **1 July 2014**, a new law comes in to effect in Queensland, the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*.

From this date, all complaints about Queensland health practitioners will be received by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) who will either manage the matters or refer them to the relevant National Board to manage.

Complaints that were made to AHPRA or National Boards before 1 July 2014 will generally continue to be managed by AHPRA on behalf of National Boards. However, under the new law the Office of the Health Ombudsman can request that a matter be referred to them to be managed. If this were to happen, AHPRA will inform both the notifier and the practitioner who is the subject of the notification.

For information about the Office of the Health Ombudsman please go to www.oho.qld.gov.au or call 133 646 (133 OHO).

Data access and research policy

AHPRA and National Boards regularly receive requests for access to data about registered Occupational Therapists. The *Data access and research policy* was developed by AHPRA and National Boards to maximise

benefits that data access can bring, while managing risks to the privacy of practitioners whose information we have collected and hold for the purposes of the National Law and other statutory obligations. The policy is available on the AHPRA [website](#).

Regulatory principles endorsed for National Scheme

The National Boards and AHPRA will be launching refreshed regulatory principles that will underpin the work of the Boards and AHPRA in regulating Australia's health practitioners, in the public interest.

The principles are endorsed by all National Boards and the AHPRA Agency Management Committee and will guide Boards and AHPRA when they are making decisions.

The principles encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation across all professions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme).

Regulatory decision making is complex and contextual, requiring judgment, experience and common sense. The principles will further support decision making which is consistent and balanced and is published at www.ahpra.gov.au/News/2014-07-01-regulatory-principles.aspx

Updating contact details

It is important that you keep your registration details up to date. Your email address will be used by AHPRA to send you important information including renewal notices. To check your contact details, go to the [Your Account](#) link on the AHPRA homepage, and enter your User ID, date of birth and password (please note that your User ID is not your registration number). If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call: 1300 419 495.

Conclusion

The National Board publishes a range of information about registration and the National Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or with 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