

Communiqué

August 2016 meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

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 functions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

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

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme 2016 combined meeting

The National Board meeting was held on 26 August to coincide with the annual National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting where entities within the scheme got together to discuss the focus for the next 12 months.

The combined meeting was attended by representatives of the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand and the Occupational Therapy Council.

National Boards and AHPRA host research summit

The 2016 Research Summit hosted by the 14 National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) was attended by more than 220 delegates who gathered together to talk about the next frontier for developing our partnership's evidence-base to improve the way we regulate.

The theme of the summit was *'patient safety through risk-based regulation'*, and presenters discussed a range of topics. At the heart of the discussion was how to contribute to safer care for patients and health consumers. Also discussed was how data collection and evaluation can help find new and innovative ways to improve regulatory processes for health practitioners and the public.

The inaugural summit provided an opportunity for the exchange of expertise and ideas between regulatory staff, experts in safety and quality in healthcare, health practitioners and leading health and medical researchers.

Read more in the [media release](#) about the summit which was held on 25 August.

Responsible advertising

The Board would like to remind all practitioners that they must comply with the provisions of the National Law on the advertising of regulated health services, relevant national, state and territory consumer protection legislation and, if applicable, legislation regulating the advertising of therapeutic goods.

All practitioners must be familiar with the *Code of Conduct* and *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services* (the guidelines) on the Board's [website](#). The guidelines equip any person who advertises a regulated health service, or any business that provides a regulated health service, with guidance on the obligations of advertisers under the National Law.

Advertising regulated health services

Section 133 of the [National Law](#) regulates the advertising of regulated health services (a service provided by, or usually provided by, a health practitioner as defined in the National Law). Section 133 provides that a person must not advertise regulated health services in a way that:

- a. is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to be misleading or deceptive; or
- b. offers a gift, discount or other inducement to attract a person to use the service or the business, unless the advertisement also states the terms and conditions of the offer; or
- c. uses testimonials or purported testimonials about the service or business; or
- d. creates an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment; or
- e. directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.

Further guidance around therapeutic claims in advertising is currently being developed and will be made available in the Board's upcoming newsletter.

Registration standards review

Preliminary consultation with key stakeholders on the registration standards review started in August. The Board looks forward to receiving feedback and consulting more widely with all interested stakeholders during public consultation. The Board's website will provide updates on the review process.

Competency standards review

Preliminary consultation on the revised standards ended on 4 September. The Board welcomes the feedback received so far and looks forward to receiving further feedback from key stakeholders.

Planning for public consultation on the revised competency standards has begun. The Board is exploring a number of different opportunities, including focus groups, to engage with the profession on this piece of work. If you are interested in participating in the Board's public consultation on the revised draft competency standards, please email otbaconsultation@ahpra.gov.au. Your details will be recorded and we will be in touch once further details on the consultation process have been finalised.

Return to practice project

The Board continues to consider research to inform their decision on the most appropriate pathways to facilitate return to occupational therapy practice after an absence.

Over the coming months the Board hopes to release an online survey seeking information on the experiences of occupational therapists who have previously returned to practice.

Graduating soon?

I will be hosting a one hour webinar for new or soon to be graduates about to embark on their occupational therapy careers on 28 September 2016 at 3:00pm AEST.

The Board invites interested students to register for the webinar on the [Board's website](#). Places are limited, so the Board would like to encourage students to register for the webinar.

Fees for 2016/17

The Board is pleased to have been able to reduce the [fees for occupational therapists](#) to \$110, which is \$20 less than in the previous year. The annual renewal fee will apply from 1 September 2016 and cover the registration period for most practitioners of 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2017.

Bond University program accredited

The Board has accredited Bond University's Master of Occupational Therapy Practice program.

This decision was based on advice received from the [Occupational Therapy Council \(Australia and New Zealand\)](#).

Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and its expectations of practitioners on its website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au. Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policy and guidelines affecting their profession.

Julie Brayshaw

Chair

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

7 September