

Communiqué

February 2017 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.

Call for applications to the Board



There are multiple practitioner and community member vacancies arising on the Board this year.

Registered practitioners may also express an interest in being considered for appointment as Board Chair when you apply for the relevant practitioner member vacancy.

Appointments are for up three years as decided by the Ministerial Council. More information about the roles, eligibility and the application process is available on the Board's [website](#).

The Board has practitioner members from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, as well as one member from either the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory or Tasmania. The Board also has representation from three (3) community members nationally.

Our main job is to protect the public. We do this through setting standards that must be met in order for someone to become and remain registered. Through a delegated committee, we consider individual applications from people seeking registration as an occupational therapist from across Australia and around the world, as well as considering notifications (complaints) made about occupational therapists. We work in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) which is responsible for implementing the National Scheme.

The National Board sits 11 times a year, usually in Melbourne but sometimes in other capital cities. All Board members are appointed by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Being a board member requires your time and input, but is a rewarding experience and your opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the profession and the public who access occupational therapy services.

Health workforce dataset released

AHPRA in conjunction with the National Boards is responsible for the national registration process for 14 health professions. A subset of data from this annual registration process, together with data from a workforce survey that is voluntarily completed at the time of registration, forms the National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS).

The NHWDS includes demographic and professional practice information for registered health professionals and is de-identified before it can be made publically available.

The NHWDS Allied Health 2015 data has recently been released as a series of fact sheets on each allied health profession, and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners across all allied health professions - the *NHWDS Allied Health Fact Sheets 2015*. They were published on a new look website – the [Health Workforce Data website](#) – by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

The fact sheets present information specific to each profession, such as information relating to scope of practice, specialties and endorsements where applicable.

Aggregate data is also accessible via the [Health Workforce Data Online Data Tool \(ODT\)](#).

The data included is generated through Workforce Surveys, which are provided by AHPRA on behalf of the Department of Health to all health professionals as part of their yearly re-registration. Each survey is slightly different and is tailored to obtain data specific to that profession.

You can find the fact sheet on the occupational therapy profession [here](#).

Revised competency standards development project

Public consultation on the revised draft competency standards started on 16 January 2017 and is due to close on 30 March 2017.

Successful focus groups have been held in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin. Focus groups in Brisbane and Sydney, and in selected rural and remote locations will also take place before the consultation period March 2017. Further information on registering for one of the remaining focus groups can be found [here](#).

The Board also hosted a webinar on Wednesday 22 February 2017 to provide further opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the public consultation process. This proved to be a popular event attracting a high number of participants. If you would like to attend the second webinar scheduled for 6pm (AEDT) on Wednesday 22 March 2017, you can register for this session [here](#).

Public consultation is open until 30 March 2017, and the Board encourages feedback via the online survey or by written submission to the Board. The public consultation document and further information on how you can provide a submission can be found [here](#).

The Board encourages all interested participants to take part in the review process and seeks your help in spreading the word about the consultation process. The Board notes that such wide-ranging consultation will help to ensure that the revised standards are reflective of the broad scope and depth of occupational therapy practice.

Local insights, National Scheme: State and territory summaries published

Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Scheme is operating in each jurisdiction, have now been published.

Based on the AHPRA and National Boards annual report for 2015/16, the summaries are available [online on AHPRA's website](#).

Information includes applications for registration by profession, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, profession and specialty.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received by AHPRA by profession, types of complaint, matters involving immediate action, monitoring and compliance, panels and tribunals, and statutory offence complaints.

To download any or all of the state and territory reports, or to view the main 2015/16 annual report, [visit our microsite](#).

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries that break down 2015/16 data by profession.

Return to practice pathways project

The Board is continuing to progress its *Return to practice project*. In November 2016, the Board piloted a survey with practitioners who have returned to practice after a prolonged absence. The Board has been reviewing the valuable feedback received through this process and has become aware of some opportunities to better facilitate re-entry into practice.

The Board considered that there are opportunities to create greater understanding and awareness of the Board's current processes for re-entry which may result in a more immediate and positive experience for those returning to practice. These opportunities are currently being investigated for implementation.

In addition to this, the Board has decided to expand the scope of the survey to hear from supervisors to gain a greater understanding of the issues and concerns that may be experienced from a supervisor perspective. You can express your interest in participating in the survey to otboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au.

New approved programs of study

The Board has approved the accreditation of three (3) programs of study from two universities:

- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy offered at Deakin University.
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours) offered at Deakin University.
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours) offered at the Bundeburg and Rockhampton campuses of CQUniversity.

These programs are approved programs for first professional registration as an occupational therapist in Australia until 31 December 2021.

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

NSW chiropractor who claimed cancer cure convicted in landmark case

A New South Wales chiropractor has been convicted of false advertising after he claimed to be able to prevent, treat and cure cancer in his advertising.

Dr Hance Limboro was sentenced after he pleaded guilty to 13 charges and was convicted and fined \$29,500 by the court and ordered to pay AHPRA's legal costs. He was fined for using testimonials in his advertising, which is not permitted when advertising regulated health services.

Dr Limboro was convicted of unlawfully advertising a regulated health service and using testimonials under the National Law. [Read the full news item](#).

This case highlights the importance that all registered practitioners, including occupational therapist 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.

AHPRA Performance Report July-September 2016

The July to September 2016 quarterly performance reports for AHPRA and the National Boards are now available.

The reports, which are part of an ongoing drive by AHPRA and the National Boards to increase their accountability and transparency, include data specific to each state and territory.

Each report covers AHPRA and the National Boards' main areas of activity:

- managing applications for registration as a health practitioner
- managing notifications about the health, performance and conduct of registered health practitioners and offences against the National Law, and
- monitoring health practitioners and students with restrictions on their registration.

The reports are available on the [Statistics page](#) of AHPRA's website. To provide feedback on the reports please email: reportingfeedback@ahpra.gov.au.

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.



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

21 February 2017