

Communiqué

March 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 member and community member vacancies arising on the Board this year.

Registered practitioner 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, application process and candidate information is available on the [AHPRA website](#) and the [Board's website](#).

The Board has practitioner members from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, and from one from either the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory or Tasmania. The Board also has representation from three (3) community members. 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 therapists from across Australia and around the world, as well as considering notifications (complaints) made about occupational therapists. We work in partnership with AHPRA which is responsible for implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The National Board sits 11 times a year, usually in Melbourne but sometimes in other capital cities. Board members are appointed by the Australian health ministers. Being a board member requires your time and input, but it is a rewarding experience.

Applications close Friday 7 April 2017 and if you are interested in having the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the profession and the public who access occupational therapy services, I would encourage you to consider applying.

Education provider forum

The Board held a productive and information forum with New South Wales education providers of occupational therapy programs at its March meeting. The forum was a valuable opportunity to discuss the Board's project work, particular the Board's competency standards development project. The Board was also keen to explore with education providers the issues and obligations of education providers in the context of the National Law. The Board's forum in New South Wales builds upon forums held in Victoria and Queensland last year. The Board will be looking at further opportunities to ensure that it continues to engage with all key stakeholders through the remainder of the year.

Revised competency standards development project

Public consultation on the revised draft competency standards closed on 30 March 2017.

Successful focus groups have been held in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane and Sydney. In addition to the focus groups two webinars were also held. Extensive feedback has also been received through the online survey and in written submissions.

The Board appreciates the time and input that stakeholders, who attended these focus groups and webinars, were able to provide on the revised draft competency standards. 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.

The Board will spend the next stage of the review analysing all the feedback that has been received. It is hoped that revised competency standards will be finalised towards the middle of this year.

Update on registration standards review

As previously advised, the Board is conducting a review of its registration standards for Professional indemnity insurance arrangements, Continuing professional development and Recency of practice and its CPD Guidelines jointly with a number of other National Boards. The Board regularly reviews its standards as part of good regulatory practice to consider developments since the standards were last approved and whether any changes are needed to keep the standards current and as effective as possible.

The Board undertook preliminary consultation late last year with key stakeholders about its draft revised standards. The Board received helpful feedback and thanks these stakeholders for taking the time to review the draft revised standards. The Board is still reviewing the feedback received and is undertaking further work including additional research. The Board is now expecting to consult publicly on the revised standards in the later half of 2017 and will publish further information about the consultation process on the Board's website then.

The Board would like to highlight that any changes made to the registration standard after public consultation will have a reasonable period of transition to support the profession in adapting to these changes.

The Board will advise its stakeholders and publish public consultation documents later this year at <http://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au>.

Audit of registration standards

The National Law requires the Board to set ethical and professional standards for the occupational therapy profession and gives the Board the power to hold practitioners to account against those standards.

The Board will be auditing into compliance with the following mandatory registration standards:

- Continuing professional development
- Recency of practice
- Professional indemnity insurance arrangements, and
- Criminal history

Overall compliance has been good to date and the Board will report on any significant issues that arose as part of the audit. Further details about the audit process can be found on the [Board's website](#).

New approved programs of study

The Board has approved the accreditation of three (3) programs of study offered at the University of the Sunshine Coast:

- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy Honours
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (with a major in Honours)

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 \(Australia and New Zealand\)](#).

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

28 March 2017