

Communiqué

September 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.

New Australian competency standards for occupational therapists

Implementation work is now underway to develop a suite of resources for the profession and the public about the new *Australian competency standards for occupational therapists*. The Board intends to release the standards towards the end of 2017 and will publish supporting materials in early 2018. Further information will be shared with practitioners as this work progresses and the Board encourages you to keep checking its website for updates.

Return to practice pathways project

The return to practice pathways project has evolved in recent months to address the feedback received from the profession regarding barriers and constraints that practitioners' experience when returning to work after a break in practice. The Board is currently developing new and updated materials to be published on the Board's website over the coming months and will be centralising information to make it more readily accessible to the profession. They hope these changes will simplify the process for re-entering the profession and provide tips and guidance on how to plan for a break in practice.

Graduating soon?

Similar to last year, Julie Brayshaw, Board Chair will be hosting a one hour webinar for new or soon to be graduates about to embark on their occupational therapy careers. She will be speaking about the role of the Board and AHPRA, the registration process and obligations of occupational therapists. This webinar will take place on 23 October 2017 at 16:00-17:00pm AEDT, followed by a Q&A session after the formal presentation.

The Board invites interested students to [register for the webinar](#) - places are limited, so sign up now to secure your place.

Fees set for 2016/17

On 15 September 2017 the Board [announced](#) that it has frozen the registration fee at \$110 for 2017/18. The fee for practitioners whose principal place of practice is New South Wales is also \$110. The National Scheme is funded by practitioners' registration fees. The Board's decision to keep the fees steady for 2017/18 ensures that practitioners are not unduly burdened, but still provides sufficient income to allow the Board to carry out its duties and protect the public.

National Boards approve policy for removing reprimands from the national register

A policy to ensure consistent removal of reprimands from the national *Register of practitioners* has been approved by all National Boards.

Reprimands on a practitioner's registration can be imposed under the National Law¹ by a performance or professional standards panel, professional standards committee (in the case of New South Wales), and a relevant tribunal or court.

The policy will ensure that reprimands are removed from the [national register](#) in a consistent and effective way. It also allows for the removal of reprimands imposed under previous legislation to be considered on an individual basis, consistent with removal powers under that legislation.

A reprimand imposed under the National Law will be removed from the national register on the publication end date set by the relevant panel, committee, court or tribunal. Where a panel or tribunal has not set a publication end date, or where the reprimand was imposed under previous legislation, the reprimand will be removed no earlier than five years from the date of initial publication.

This is subject to:

- the practitioner making an application for removal of the reprimand
- no relevant event having occurred in the five-year period of publication of the reprimand,
- and legal advice confirming the power to remove a reprimand imposed under previous legislation.

A relevant event is any health, performance or conduct notification, action taken against the practitioner in relation to an adverse disclosure on renewal of registration, new information returned on a criminal history check or a confirmed breach of restrictions. It also includes when action has been taken against a practitioner regarding their conduct, health or performance.

New notifications, irrespective of whether action was taken, will also be taken into account if an application for removal of a reprimand is received after the five-year period of publication.

The policy will take effect from 2 October 2017 and will be reviewed annually. An application form for removal of a reprimand from the national register will be published under [Common forms](#) on the AHPRA website

Co-Chairs announced to help lead the way for the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health strategy

The National Scheme² is pleased to announce the appointment of co-Chairs for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy group.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia have been appointed as co-Chairs of the group.

The strategy group has been brought together to develop the National Scheme's first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health strategy.

AHPRA, the 14 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health strategy with the vision of: *Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

Quarterly registration data released

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's occupational therapy workforce, including a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants. Registration data from June 2017 is now published on the Board's [Statistics page](#).

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

² National Accreditation and Registration Scheme (the National Scheme).

Security tip: keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards have made changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

If you use Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board's website and are experiencing difficulty accessing web pages and online services, the Board recommends you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience. Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check or update your contact information by logging in to the [online services portal](#) on the AHPRA website. Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

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

26 September 2017