

Communiqué

October 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.

Board website improvements

The Board has undertaken a comprehensive review of its website to consolidate and centralise information about all of its [registration standards](#), [codes and guidelines](#). This review was initiated, following an assessment of information currently contained on the Board's website in relation to recency of practice. Following this review the Board considered that there was merit in broadening the changes to encompass all of its registration standards, codes and guidelines.

These changes will help improve the online user experience for practitioners and the public to make it easier to locate information and better understand the Board's expectations for occupational therapists. The changes have been made to the Board's website and the Board will continue to review and refine the information contained on the website.

Graduating soon?

The Board successfully hosted another one-hour webinar this year for new or upcoming graduates about the role of the Board and AHPRA, the registration process and obligations of occupational therapists. There were 245 participants out of 404 event registrants. The Board was pleased to see so many new or upcoming graduates already seeking to engage with the Board and AHPRA prior to embarking on their occupational therapy careers. A recording of the webinar, including the presentation and a FAQ document will be published on the Board's website over the coming weeks.

The Board hopes to continue to host webinars for new graduates, and more broadly on other topics of interest to the profession, into the future.

Developing new Australian occupational therapy competency standards

Implementation planning for the development of resources for the profession and the public about the new *Australian occupational therapy competency standards for occupational therapists* is well underway. Given the time of the year, the Board has agreed that it will plan for the release of the standards in early 2018. Currently they are looking at producing a range of materials to help practitioners and members of the public understand the new competency standards and put them into practice.

Further information will be shared in communiqués as this work progresses.

Registration renewal: Updating the national register

Registration renewal for occupational therapists will open soon. This year when completing your renewal, you will be asked to check that your qualification(s) are recorded correctly on the online national register of practitioners. This step is being included this year to make it easy for practitioners to confirm and update

their details, if required. This information will help to maintain the integrity of the national register of practitioners and keep the public [safe in the knowledge](#) that its health practitioners are registered and qualified. Under the National Law, the national register should include details of any qualification relied on by you to obtain registration.

Applications for renewal received in December will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee - this is outlined in the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. A [fees schedule](#) is published on the Board's website.

Occupational therapists, whose application for general registration is received on time or during the following one-month-late period, can continue practising while their application is processed. Practitioners who do not apply to renew their registration by 31 December 2017 will have lapsed registration. These occupational therapists will be removed from the [Register of practitioners](#) and will not be able to practice within the profession in Australia.

Board to participate as CLEAR comes to Australia

The [Fifth International Congress on Professional and Occupational Regulation](#) will be held this November in Melbourne, Australia. Board members will be attending along with representatives from other National Boards and AHPRA. The congress will allow the Board to discuss regulatory issues with other international regulatory stakeholders who share global perspectives on licensure and regulation. Important perspectives and discussions will be gained during the congress including insight into the latest standards and best practices in the world of regulation, as well as providing a forum for networking and sharing of ideas with international peers. Additional information about the conference is on the [AHPRA website](#).

Legislative changes passed to establish a new National Board for paramedicine

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 has been passed by the Queensland Parliament and has received royal assent. This Bill contains amendments to the National Law that will apply in all states and territories except Western Australia (South Australia also needs to make a regulation to give effect to the amendments). The Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia has also passed a corresponding amendment Bill (the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Amendment Bill 2017) which will now be considered by WA's Legislative Council.

The passing of the Bill in Queensland marks a significant day for health practitioner regulation as these are the first legislative amendments to the National Law since the start of the National Scheme in 2010. These changes have enabled the [national regulation of paramedicine to move a step closer](#) with the appointment of the first Paramedicine Board of Australia, which was announced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council at their meeting held on 19 October 2017. Also, new measures that strengthen public protection will be introduced and there will be formal recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

To find out what the amendments include read the news item on the [AHPRA website](#).

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).

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

24 October 2017