

Communiqué

May 2018 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 appointments and reappointments

At the May meeting of the Board, members acknowledged and thanked Ms Louise Johnson for her work with the Board since 2012. Ms Johnson's term with the Board finished on 6 May 2018. The Board greatly value the skills and experience that Ms Johnson brought to the table, particularly in the early years of the transition of the profession to national registration. The Board wished her well for her future work in the National Scheme.

Australian occupational therapy competency standards (AOTCS) 2018

Following the release of the Australian occupational therapy competency standards (AOTCS) 2018, the Board has begun planning for further promotional work to support the new competency standards when they take effect in January 2019. While this work is in its early stages, the Board would keen to engage with you all about the new competency standards and what they mean for you. If you have any feedback on the new standards, please send through your thoughts to otboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au. Your feedback will further inform the work the Board undertakes to help occupational therapists' understand and adopt the new competency standards into their practice.

Registration standards review project

The Board has been participating in a schedule review of its Professional indemnity insurance arrangements, continuing professional development and recency of practice registration standards along with a number of other National Boards. Public consultation on the review was completed at the start of May 2018. The feedback received was largely supportive of the changes being proposed to the draft standards, and the Board thanks those stakeholders who participated in the review.

The Board is currently reviewing the submissions received with a view to finalising amendments to be made to the draft standards.

Program accreditation

The Board approved the accreditation of the following programs of study from University of Canberra:

- Master of Occupational therapy until 31 December 2022 offered at the University of Canberra
- Master of Occupational therapy until 30 June 2023 offered at Swinburne University of Technology

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

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 [Statistic's webpage](#).

Vexing not vexatious: Report finds more risk in not reporting

New independent research commissioned by AHPRA takes a first international look at vexatious complaints, finding there is more risk from people not reporting concerns than from making dubious complaints.

It also found that while being on the receiving end of a complaint is tough – the complaint is much more likely to be vexing than vexatious.

The report will be used to inform best practice for reducing, identifying, and managing vexatious complaints and helps to identify opportunities to work with others to help reduce their frequency and adverse consequences.

For further information read the research summary report Reducing, indentifying and managing vexatious complaints on the [AHPRA website](#).

New tool about testimonials to help advertisers 'get it right'

A new tool to help practitioners and advertisers understand their obligations about using testimonials and reviews to advertise regulated health services is now available.

The testimonials tool is the latest in a series of [resources and support materials](#) developed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards to help health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services to comply with the National Law.

The tool includes information and flow charts to help practitioners and advertisers understand why testimonials are not allowed and which reviews or feedback can be used in advertising.

Under section 133(1) of the National Law a person must not advertise a regulated health service, or a business that provides a regulated health service, in a way that uses testimonials or purported testimonials about the service or business.

In the context of the National Law, advertising includes any public communication that promotes a regulated health service such as all forms of printed and electronic media and a testimonial includes recommendations or statements about the clinical aspects of a regulated health service.

Using testimonials to advertise regulated health services is prohibited under the National Law because they are not usually a balanced source of information, and typically include a narrow selection of positive comments about patient experiences. Also the outcomes experienced by one patient do not necessarily reflect the likely outcomes for others, so a testimonial doesn't tell the whole story.

[Read more](#) about why testimonials can't be used in advertising.

Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important that your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your details via the Login icon at the top right of 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.

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

22 May 2018