

Communiqué

10 September 2018

August 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.

Webinar – Graduating Soon?

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 registered occupational therapists. This webinar will take place on Monday, 24 September 2018, 15:00-16:00 AEST, followed by a Q&A session after the presentation.

The Board has invited students enrolled in approved programs of study to register for the webinar and the heads of the occupational therapy schools have been invited to encourage students to participate in the discussion.

Spaces are limited so the Board encourages registering as soon as possible. Details on how to register for the webinar are available on the [Board's website](#).

Fees set for 2018/19

The Board has reviewed its fees and has decided to freeze the registration fee at \$110 for 2018/19. 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 decision to keep the fee frozen ensures practitioners are not unduly burdened, but still provides sufficient income to allow the Board to carry out its duties and protect the public.

The fee continues to support the Board in the continual development of a safe and mobile Australian workforce for health practitioners and the public in the most efficient ways possible. It also allows the Board to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training for practitioners.

Latest registration data released

The Board has published its latest [quarterly registration data](#) on its website.

The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns, including information on types of registration held, principal place of practice, registrant age and gender.

Newsletter

Issue 11 of the Board's Newsletter was published on 9 August 2018. This Newsletter has been emailed to all registrants and is published on the [Board's website](#).

Practitioner audit

The Board began a scheduled audit to assess registered occupational therapists compliance with the Board's [registration standards](#) to ensure that all registrants understand and comply with the requirements of the National Law.

Registrants who are selected at random for audit are invited to check the Board's website which provides comprehensive information about [the audit process](#) and contact details for any related queries.

Where appropriate, the Board adopts an educational approach to conducting audits, seeking to balance the protection of the public with the use of suitable regulatory force to manage practitioners found to be non-compliant with the audited registration standards.

Consultation – proposed reforms to the National Law

Health Ministers are consulting on some proposed reforms to the National Law, which provides the framework for health practitioner regulation in Australia.

The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) is leading the consultation, in the second stage of the reform process. The first amendments in *The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017* have already been made and are now being implemented.

More information about the reform process, a summary of the proposed changes and the consultation paper 'Regulation of Australia's health professions: keeping the National Law up to date and fit for purpose' is available on the [COAG Health Council website](#).

Submissions can be sent to NRAS.consultation@dhhs.vic.gov.au. The consultation closes Wednesday 31 October 2018.

Advertising – selectively editing reviews or testimonials may break the law

AHPRA has issued more guidance for advertisers to make it clearer that selectively editing reviews is not acceptable.

Under the National Law, testimonials about clinical care are not permitted, but reviews about non-clinical aspects of care are allowed.

In a recent case, an advertiser removed all negative comments from patients' reviews. This selective editing changed the meaning of the reviews and had the potential to mislead the public. AHPRA's new guidance makes it clear this is not acceptable and outlines the rules about editing or moderating reviews. It is misleading to:

- edit a review that is negative to make it positive, as this falsely presents the feedback
- edit a review that has a mix of negative and positive comments so that the published review only has positive comments, as this falsely implies that the reviewer only had positive feedback, or
- edit a review so that it no longer accurately reflects the reviewer's feedback and presents an inaccurate or false impression of the reviewer's views.

Reviews influence consumers healthcare choices so advertisers must make sure reviews are genuine and not misleading.

The way advertisers moderate and publish reviews must comply with the National Law and the [Australian Consumer Law](#).

The updated [testimonial tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section on the AHPRA website.

For more information, access the [Advertising resources](#) on the AHPRA website.

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 your 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

10 September 2018