



Communiqué

Sixth meeting of the Dental Board of Australia 26 March 2010

The Dental Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*. At the sixth meeting, on 26 March 2010, the Board made decisions about a range of matters that will impact on the transition to the national registration and accreditation scheme.

Registration transition arrangements

The Board is planning to write to every registered dental practitioner in late April 2010, to support the transition of all registrants to the national scheme. The letter will explain each practitioner's registration type from 1 July 2010. The letter will detail the information that will appear on the online national Register of Dental Practitioners. The Board is urging all practitioners to ensure the contact details held by their current State or Territory Board are accurate and up to date before 30 June 2010.

The Board has made a range of decisions about the registration transition process. In general, dental practitioners will transition to the type of registration that matches their current registration. While the name of some registration categories will change, the Board has no intention to change any dental practitioner's current scope of practice. Please check the registration type allocated to you in the April letter and provide feedback to AHPRA if there are any errors.

Conditions, undertakings and reprimands on the Register

The National Law requires the Board to publish conditions imposed and undertakings accepted from dental practitioners on the Register of Dental Practitioners. However, the National Law also allows the Board to decide to not record a condition imposed or an undertaking accepted when the practitioner has an impairment, if it is necessary to protect the practitioner's privacy and there is not an overriding public interest for the condition or the details of the undertaking to be recorded.

The Board decided to not routinely publish the details of conditions imposed or undertakings accepted as a result of impairment. However, in the interests of transparency, the Board will place the statement that the practitioner has conditions related to their health on the register. There may be circumstances when the Board will decide on a case-by-case basis to publish the details of some practice restrictions imposed due to impairment when there is an overriding public interest.

Proof of identity

The Board approved an approach for authenticating the identity of an individual who applies for registration. This approach relies on a 100-point check, consistent with the Attorney General's standard. It applies to all new applications for registration from 1 July 2010. The Board will require applicants for registration to have their documents certified by an Authorised Officer. A list of class of persons that are Authorised Officers will be published.

State and Territory board structures and delegations

The key responsibilities of the Board are to develop registration standards, codes and guidelines, approve accreditation standards and programs of study, determine eligibility for registration, manage notifications and negotiate the health professions agreement which determine funding and service arrangements with AHPRA.

The Board has agreed to have State and Regional Boards, which will be delegated some of the Board's key responsibilities. There will be a State Board in NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and two Regional Boards, one for Victoria, Tasmania and ACT and the second for South Australia and the Northern Territory. The Board is in the process of finalising the matters it will delegate to the State and Regional boards and to AHPRA.

The Board will write to current State and Territory board members to thank them for their ongoing support in the transition to the national scheme and encourage their continued role in the scheme after 1 July 2010. In addition, the Board recognises the need to retain the experience and expertise of practitioners who support the State and Territory boards by serving on Panels.

Registration Standards, codes and guidelines

The Board noted that the following codes and guidelines have been released for public consultation period **ending on 9 April 2010**:

- Mandatory Notifications
- Advertising
- Conduct
- Infection control
- Continuing Professional Development
- Dental Records.

In addition, the Board noted that the Ministerial Council is scheduled to consider the Registration Standards submitted by all of the Boards for approval. The Board decided to clarify that the Scope of Practice Registration Standard is drafted to reflect the current scope of practice which exists in Australia for oral health therapists, dental therapists and dental hygienists.

The term supervision in the Scope of Practice Registration Standard is defined as *oversight, direction, guidance and/or support*, which is a broad and flexible definition and does not require the person providing the supervision to be physically on site. For oral health therapists, dental therapists and dental hygienists the supervision requirements could be met through ensuring that a structured professional relationship exists with a dentist who could be consulted as necessary via any means.

Conclusion

The Board would like to acknowledge and thank the stakeholders involved in a number of effective meetings which have taken place in recent weeks. These meetings have provided excellent opportunity to discuss issues and work together to support the transition to the national scheme.

John Lockwood
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
6 April 2010