



Communiqué

Thirty fifth meeting of the Dental Board of Australia – 19 October 2012

The Dental Board of Australia (the Dental Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (National Law). This communiqué highlights key issues from the Dental Board meeting held in October 2012.

Review of the scope of practice registration standard

The Dental Board's Scope of Practice Review Committee met with key national organisations, including those representing the divisions on the Board's Register, on 18 October 2012. The forum was held to enable feedback on the key matters of the *Scope of practice registration standard* to be reviewed. Public consultation on the standard will occur in early 2013.

Review of accreditation functions

The National Law requires National Boards to review the accreditation function arrangements no later than 30 June 2013. These arrangements have been in place since before the commencement of the National Law when the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council appointed the Australian Dental Council the accreditation authority for dental practitioners under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) from 1 July 2010 for three years.

The Dental Board is currently undertaking the review of accreditation functions, as are the other nine National Boards that entered the National Scheme in 2010. The Dental Board has released a public consultation paper on its website for feedback from practitioners and the public.

Annual report

AHPRA and the National Boards submitted the 2012 annual report to Ministers by 30 September as required by the National Law. The report, released on 1 November, details the work of the National Boards and AHPRA in implementing the second year of the National Scheme. The release was supported by the publication of a special edition of the *AHPRA Report*. The annual report and *AHPRA Report* will both be published online.

Registration as an oral health therapist – New Zealand qualifications

The Board recently considered a report from its accreditation authority and has decided that the following degrees from New Zealand are substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an approved qualification for registration as an oral health therapist:

- Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago (conferred from 2009)
- Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health, Auckland University of Technology (conferred from 2011)

Practitioners who hold either of these qualifications (within the relevant timeframe) will be eligible to apply for registration in the oral health therapist division of the national register.

Review of standards, guidelines and codes

The Dental Board and the other National Boards that have been in the National Scheme since 2010 have begun preparations for reviewing the registration standards, guidelines and codes that were developed before the scheme commenced.

The National Boards that joined the National Scheme in 2012 will also be participating in the public consultations on common registration standards, codes and guidelines.

Practitioners, members of the public and other stakeholders will be able to provide feedback during the public consultation phases of the reviews. Where registration standards, guidelines and codes are common to all, or most, of the National Boards, the consultation phase will be coordinated across National Boards to make providing feedback easier.

Consultation is expected to occur over several stages, starting in 2013. The consultations are being staged (rather than happening simultaneously) to give stakeholders a better opportunity to provide feedback. Information about the reviews will be included in forthcoming communiqués and on the website as they commence.

Work on the reviews will include public consultation on a proposed social media policy. Until then, the Board's Code of conduct and Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services provide guidance about appropriate use of social media and online behaviour.

Board newsletter

The Board is finalising the content for its next Newsletter to be released in November 2012. The Board has agreed to publish two Newsletters per year. The June 2012 Newsletter was well received, with a high proportion of dental practitioners opening the June newsletter that was emailed to them.

Dental Board website update

The Dental Board will shortly make available on its website a *Fact Sheet: Obligations of dental practitioners regarding use of title* for dental practitioners with respect to the use of specialist and other titles.

The National Law requires AHPRA and the Dental Board to enter into a Health Profession Agreement (HPA). The HPA for 2012/2013 is now available on the Dental Board website.

The Dental Board continues to encourage all dental practitioners to regularly check the Dental Board's website at www.dentalboard.gov.au for information and updates relating to the dental profession.

Registration renewal

The Dental Board would like to remind all dental practitioners that their registration is due for renewal by **30 November 2012**. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) will email reminders to renew to those registrants for which they hold a current email address.

The Dental Board reminds dental practitioners that under the National Law, all registered dental practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year and there is no option for AHPRA or the Dental Board to renew your registration after it has lapsed without a new application.

The Board encourages all dental practitioners to provide AHPRA with a current email contact address by updating their contact details through online services. This will enable AHPRA to contact dental practitioners about important registration information and the National Board to contact dental practitioners with important updates for the profession.

John Lockwood AM
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
1 November 2012