



Communiqué

September 2017 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 89th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 22 September 2017 at the National Office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in Melbourne.

This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the Board's meeting as well as other important information.

We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. We encourage you to distribute it to colleagues and interested parties, including in the organisation you work in.

Registration renewal: Updating the national register

Registration renewal for the dental profession will open soon and we want to let you know that this year it will include an extra step.

When completing your renewal online, you will be asked to check that your qualification(s) are recorded correctly on the [national register of practitioners](#).

We are including this as part of online renewal to make it easy for you to confirm and update these details if required. You will be helping us to maintain the integrity of the national register, which helps to protect the public.

The national register keeps the public safe in the knowledge that its health practitioners are registered and qualified. Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), the national register should include details of any qualification relied on by you to obtain registration.

Look out for an email from AHPRA soon inviting you to renew online.

Board sets fees for 2017/18

The Board has announced the national registration fee for dental practitioners for 2017/18. The fees are:

- dentists and specialists: \$647
- dental prosthetists: \$575
- dental hygienists and therapists: \$319

The fees for practitioners whose principal place of practice is New South Wales¹ are:

- dentists and specialists: \$647
- dental prosthetists: \$575
- dental hygienists and therapists: \$319

¹ NSW is a [co-regulatory jurisdiction](#).

A [full fee schedule](#), including the fee arrangements for practitioners whose principal place of practice is NSW, is published on the Board's website.

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) is funded by practitioners' registration fees. The decision to increase the fees by indexation ensures practitioners are not unduly burdened, but still provides sufficient income to allow the Board to carry out its duties and protect the public.

Fees 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.

New fact sheet: The use of teeth whitening products by dental practitioners

The Board has published a fact sheet on the use of teeth whitening products by dental practitioners. The fact sheet explains the role of the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) (TGA) and the [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission](#) (ACCC) in regulating teeth whitening products and what the Board expects of dental practitioners when using teeth whitening products in their practice.

The Board's current *Interim policy on teeth whitening* (2010) will be retired. The Board considers that a specific policy is not needed because the existing regulatory framework, which includes the Board's standards, codes and guidelines, applies to all dental practitioners regardless of the type of care being delivered or the setting.

When the Board receives a notification (complaint) about the use of teeth whitening products by a dental practitioner, it considers whether the facts and circumstances of the use of that product are consistent with good practice and meet the requirements of any applicable legislation. In managing and assessing a notification, the Board may draw on advice from a range of experts, including health practitioners other than dental practitioners.

National Boards approve policy for removing reprimands from the national register

A policy to ensure consistent removal of reprimands from the national *Register of practitioners* has been approved by all National Boards.

Reprimands on a practitioner's registration can be imposed under the National Law by a performance or professional standards panel, professional standards committee (NSW), and a relevant tribunal or court.

The policy will ensure that reprimands are removed from the [national register](#) in a consistent and effective way. It also allows for the removal of reprimands imposed under previous legislation to be considered on an individual basis, consistent with removal powers under that legislation.

A reprimand imposed under the National Law will be removed from the national register on the publication end date set by the relevant panel, committee, court or tribunal. Where a panel or tribunal has not set a publication end date, or where the reprimand was imposed under previous legislation, the reprimand will be removed no earlier than five years from the date of initial publication.

This is subject to:

- the practitioner making an application for removal of the reprimand
- no relevant event having occurred in the five-year period of publication of the reprimand, and
- legal advice confirming the power to remove a reprimand imposed under previous legislation.

A relevant event is any health, performance or conduct notification, action taken against the practitioner in relation to an adverse disclosure on renewal of registration, new information returned on a criminal history check or a confirmed breach of restrictions. It also includes when action has been taken against a practitioner about their conduct, health or performance. New notifications, irrespective of whether action was taken, will also be taken into account if an application for removal of a reprimand is received after the five-year period of publication.

The policy will take effect from 2 October 2017 and will be reviewed annually. An application form for removal of a reprimand from the national register will be published under [Common forms](#) on the AHPRA website.

Legislative changes passed to establish a new National Board for paramedicine and provide stronger protection for the public

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 the 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.

The changes to the National Law will enable the Paramedicine Board of Australia to be established with the appointment of inaugural board members by Health Ministers in the near future. 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.

Decisions about proposed amendments to the National Law are made by Health Ministers and the governments of all States and Territories, with the changes progressed through the Queensland Parliament (as the host jurisdiction of the National Law), and the Western Australian Parliament. AHPRA will work with National Boards, governments, health departments, professions and consumer representatives to support the implementation of the changes to the National Law into daily operations.

While the Queensland Bill has received royal assent, commencement of many of the changes to the National Law are likely to occur in a staggered process over the coming months.

The Health Practitioner Regulation and National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017 as passed by the Queensland Parliament can be accessed the [Queensland parliament website](#).

More information on the regulation of paramedics under the National Scheme can be accessed 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 an account junk box.

Conclusion

The National Board publishes a range of information about registration and the National Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.dentalboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

John Lockwood AM
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
11 October 2017