

Welcome to the Dental Board of Australia's October 2017 newsletter.

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Renew your registration online now

Dental practitioners who are due to renew their general, specialist or non-practising registration with the Dental Board by 30 November can apply online now.

We remind dental practitioners to carefully read the Board's registration standards, which specify the profession's standards of practice, before making declarations in their application for renewal of registration.

If a practitioner holds an endorsement for conscious sedation they must complete an approved refresher course before applying for renewal of registration and the endorsement. The national Register of practitioners confirms if a dental practitioner's registration includes an endorsement.

Dentists or dental specialists who use conscious sedation in their practice must have endorsed registration. More information about conscious sedation is available on the Board's website.

A series of reminders to renew are being sent to dental practitioners by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), on behalf of the Board. The email reminders include a link to online renewal and will be sent to the email address the practitioner has provided to AHPRA.

A video explaining how to renew registration online is available on the Practitioner Services page of the AHPRA website or check out the Board's video for dental practitioners: *An overview of your obligations as a registered dental practitioner*. The video provides an overview of the dental practitioners' obligations described in the Board's standards, policies, guidelines and code. It highlights some of the main requirements for dental practitioners to maintain registration and provides guidance to dental practitioners on expected behaviours.

The video does not cover all the details of the requirements, so read the Board's Renewal FAQ for more information.

News from the Board

Appointments to state and territory committees

The Board has established state and territory committees to make decisions about individual dental practitioners in each jurisdiction. This includes all registration and notification decisions.

The Board has delegated many of its powers so that local decision-makers can respond effectively and in a timely way to local matters, working in a national policy framework.

The state and territory committees are made up of practitioner and community members and are appointed by the Board.

Committee members' appointments expired on 30 June 2017 and a number of appointments have been made.

The Board thanks committee members who recently finished their terms, particularly those members that transitioned to the National Scheme¹, Associate Professor John Dale, Dr Craig McCracken, Mr Donald Malcolmson, Dr Murray Thomas, and Ms Bronwyn Davies. The Board wishes them all well in their future endeavours.

The Board also welcomes all newly appointed members.

Thank you to outgoing chairs of committees

Dr Gerard Parkinson, Dr Mark Leedham and Associate Professor John Highfield finished their terms as chairs of the Western Australia, Northern Territory and New South Wales committees respectively.

All three chairs have provided leadership to their committees. They have worked tirelessly in dental regulation for many years to advocate for high standards of dental practice in their communities. The Board thanks them for their dedication. Dr Parkinson will continue as a practitioner member of the Western Australia committee.

Welcome to new chairs of committees

Dr Simon Shanahan, Dr Erna Melton and Professor Iven Klinberg have been appointed to chair the Western Australian and Northern Territory and New South Wales committees respectively. All are experienced committee members with wide-ranging clinical and regulatory experience. The Board welcomes them to their new role.

Reminder: Infection control obligations under the National Law

Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high quality healthcare for patients and a safe working environment for those that work in healthcare settings.

The Board expects dental practitioners to practise in a way that maintains and enhances public health and safety by ensuring that the risk of the spread of infection is prevented.

The Board has published [Guidelines on infection control](#) to describe the infection control obligations of dental practitioners. They list the key documents that a dental practitioner must act in accordance with, as well as the behaviours that the Board expects of dental practitioners.

The Board has published additional information to help dental practitioners meet their obligations.

- A [fact sheet](#) on the infections control obligations of dental practitioners under the National Law².
- A [self-audit tool](#) that practitioners may choose to use to see how they comply with the Board's Guidelines in their workplace.
- '[Tips for dental patients](#)' and a [video](#) to help make sure patients are getting safe care from their dental practitioner.

It is the responsibility of every registered dental practitioner to ensure that they meet their infection control obligations.

Scheduled review of Scope of practice registration standard and Guidelines for scope of practice

The Board has started its scheduled review of the [Scope of practice registration standard](#) and [Guidelines for scope of practice](#) which establish the requirements for the scope of practice for all registered dental practitioners.

Section 38 of the National Law gives the Board the discretion to develop registration standards about the scope of practice of health practitioners registered in the profession. The Board developed a revised standard which was approved by the Ministerial Council on 11 April 2014. The standard and associated guideline came into effect from 30 June 2014.

As part of this review and in line with its obligations under the National Law, the Board will be carrying out a consultation. Consultation is an important part of the Board's engagement with dental practitioners, members of the public and other stakeholders. The feedback provided is greatly valued, and informs the Board's development of its regulatory documents.

The Board will publicly consult on the registration standard and guideline in 2018. Public consultations are widely communicated in the Board's newsletters, communiqués and website, and are open to everyone.

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.

Update on specialist registration pathways for overseas-trained dental specialists

On 1 July 2016, the Board began the assessment of all applications from [overseas specialist qualifications for substantial equivalence](#) to Australian specialist programs.

1 The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

2 The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

As part of the Board's work program on specialist registration pathways for overseas-trained dental specialists, the Board with AHPRA has engaged the Australian Dental Council (ADC) to develop an outcome-based assessment model for overseas-trained dental specialists applying for specialist registration in Australia.

This project includes the development of an implementation framework but does not include the implementation of the model. The Board will use its Expert Reference Group – Specialists to liaise with the ADC to help progress the work.

Given the associated work on specialist registration pathways for overseas-trained dental specialists, the Board will continue to put the review of the specialist registration standard on hold to accommodate any other requirements that may be needed to support future registration pathways.

Revised List of recognised dental specialties, related specialist titles, and definitions

The Board's *List of recognised dental specialties, related specialist titles and definitions* has been revised following consultation and has been approved by the [COAG Health Council](#). The revised list will take effect from 1 October 2017.

The revised list of recognised dental specialties reflects minor technical changes to the specialties of oral medicine, oral pathology and forensic odontology. The changes align the specialist titles with international nomenclature and/or better reflect the nature of work carried out by dentists in the existing specialty.

As part of the review of the *Registration standard for specialist registration*, the Board consulted on these minor amendments to the list of recognised dental specialties. There was support for these revisions from all stakeholders, including governments and the relevant dental specialist colleges.

The revised list is published on the [Registration standards](#) page of the Board's website.

Joint notifications workshop with AHPRA and ADA

Senior leaders from the Board, AHPRA and the Australian Dental Association (ADA) met on 21 July 2017. The workshop focused on building a joint understanding of how notifications are managed in the National Scheme. A joint communiqué of the meeting has been published on the [Board's website](#).

The Board was represented by Dr John Lockwood AM, Board Chair, Dr Murray Thomas, practitioner member and Mr Robin Brown, community member.

Graduating soon? Need to register? Watch our new video and apply now

Are you about to graduate soon and start your career as a dental practitioner? If the answer is yes, the Board has developed a new [video](#) to help you when you register with the Board for the first time.

The Board's main role is to protect the public by setting standards, codes and guidelines for dental practitioners to meet to practice the profession in Australia.

Graduates need to be registered as a dental practitioner with the Board before they start practising. The [video](#), which is available on the Board's website, explains to students the importance of meeting their regulatory obligations so they are all set for the next phase of their career journey.

'Meeting your obligations and registering with the Board is central to being a responsible and safe dental practitioner – getting this right at the start of your career is important,' said Dr John Lockwood AM, Chair of the Dental Board of Australia.

'All registered dental practitioners were once graduates and we understand that the obligations you must meet when you practice can sometimes feel overwhelming. We created this video to help you by highlighting some of the core standards, codes and guidelines you will be declaring that you meet when you apply for registration.'

'This video will help graduates familiarise themselves with the benefits of health practitioner regulation and what it means for them,' said Dr Lockwood. 'Meeting your obligations throughout your career helps keep the public safe. The Board is with you every step.'

The video provides an overview of the obligations that all graduates must meet to maintain registration and gives some helpful information when applying for registration.

The video can be found on the Board's dedicated [Student registration](#) webpage as well as the Board and AHPRA's [YouTube](#) channel and [Facebook](#) page. It can also be found on [twitter](#) via the hashtag #dentalgrad.

How to apply for registration

Final-year dental students who will soon complete an [approved program of study](#) can go online now to apply for registration before they graduate.

The [online graduate application service](#) on the AHPRA website helps to smooth the path from study to work by enabling final-year students to apply for registration with the Board four to six weeks before completing their course.

Graduates are encouraged to find out how to use the online graduate application by accessing the information on the AHPRA website under [Graduate applications](#).

There are three simple steps to registration for graduates:

1. Complete an online application for registration **four to six weeks** before completing their course.
2. Upload supporting documents when completing their online application.
3. Wait to be contacted by AHPRA.

What happens next?

AHPRA assesses the application which can only be finalised once the education provider provides advice that the student is eligible to graduate. AHPRA contacts the student if more information is needed and/or to confirm that registration has been granted.

New graduates registered with the Board are eligible to start work as soon as their name is published on the [national register of practitioners](#).

Updated information for dental prosthetists with a non-approved qualification

If a dental prosthetist holds overseas qualifications and is not registered in New Zealand then they can complete the assessment process overseen by the ADC. Information about this pathway to registration in Australia for overseas qualified practitioners can be found on the [ADC's website](#).

Regulatory action – court and tribunal cases

A number of recent regulatory actions have achieved greater protection of the public. Significant outcomes include:

- [Kirby v Dental Council of New South Wales](#)
- [Health Care Complaints Commission v Chan](#)

Practitioners can find out more about the outcomes of court and tribunal action on the Board's website – see the [News section](#). They can also visit AHPRA's website, where there is a page dedicated to court and tribunal outcomes under [Publications and resources](#).

New registration data released

The Board has released its quarterly registration data. Read the latest report and other statistics on its [website](#). For the first time female dental practitioners (50.2%) outnumber male dental practitioners (49.8%).

New advertising information available for practitioners

New advertising information is now available on the AHPRA website to help dental practitioners check and correct their advertising so they comply with legal requirements.

It includes:

- examples of non-compliant advertising by registered health practitioners and changes that would help it to comply with the National Law
- information about AHPRA's process for managing advertising complaints, and
- a summary of advertising guidelines.

Dental practitioners are reminded that it is not acceptable to use testimonials in your own advertising, such as on your Facebook page, in a print ad or on your website.

More about advertising requirements is in the Advertising resources section of the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

National Scheme news

COAG Health Council meeting communiqué

The federal and state and territory health ministers met in Brisbane on 4 August 2017 at the [COAG Health Council](#) to discuss a range of national health issues. The meeting was chaired by the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon. Jill Hennessy. AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher attended the Australian

Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council) meeting which brings together all health ministers throughout Australia to provide oversight for the work of the National Scheme. AHPRA and the National Boards provide a regular update to the Ministerial Council on our work.

The meeting included an agreement by health ministers to proceed with amendments to the National Law to strengthen penalties for offences committed by people who hold themselves out to be a registered health practitioner, including those who use reserved professional titles or carry out restricted practices when not registered. Ministers also agreed to proceed with an amendment to introduce a custodial sentence with a maximum term of up to three years for these offences. These important reforms will be fast tracked to strengthen public protection under the National Law. Preparation will now begin on a draft amendment bill, with a view to being introduced to the Queensland Parliament in 2018.

Ministers also discussed mandatory reporting provisions for treating health practitioners, agreeing that protecting the public from harm is of paramount importance as is supporting practitioners to seek help and treatment for their health concerns, including for their mental health and well-being. They agreed practitioners should be able to confidentially seek treatment for health issues while preserving the requirement for patient safety. It was agreed that the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council will recommend a nationally consistent approach to mandatory reporting following a consultation process with consumer and practitioner groups. A proposal on mandatory reporting is expected to be considered at the November 2017 meeting of the COAG Health Council.

The Council produces a communiqué from its meeting which can be accessed on [AHPRA's 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).

The amendments include:

- **Introduction of national regulation of paramedics:** This will mean the establishment of the Paramedicine Board of Australia, with national registration of paramedics expected to begin in the second half of 2018.
- **Recognising nursing and midwifery as separate professions:** The National Law will be updated to recognise the two professions as separate. There is no plan to change the structure of the NMBA or for how nurses and midwives will interact with the Board.
- **Changes to strengthen the management of complaints (notifications) and disciplinary enforcement powers of AHPRA and National Boards, including:**
 - a) **Provision of practice information:** A National Board may require a health practitioner to provide details of their practice arrangements, regardless of how they are engaged to practise. This will mean health practitioners that practise in multiple locations or under different employment; contractual or voluntary arrangements will be required under law to provide this information to their National Board when asked to do so.
 - b) **Public interest grounds for immediate action:** Broadening the grounds by which a National Board may take immediate action against a health practitioner or student if it reasonably believes it is in the public interest.
 - c) **Extension of prohibition order powers:** A responsible tribunal may issue a prohibition order to prohibit a person from providing any type of health service or using any protected or specified title. A breach of a prohibition order in any state or territory will also become an offence with a maximum penalty of \$30,000.
 - d) **Communication with notifiers:** This change will improve communication for people who make a complaint or report concern to AHPRA and National Boards (notifiers) about a registered health practitioner's health, performance or conduct. National Boards will now have the discretion to inform notifiers of a greater range of actions taken by the National Board in response to their complaint or concern and the reasons for their actions.
- **Additional powers for the COAG Health Council (formerly operating as the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council) to change the structure of National Boards:** This means that Health Ministers may make changes to the structure and composition of the National Boards by regulation following consultation. There are no current proposals to change the structure of National Boards.

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 Bill can be accessed on the [Queensland Parliament website](#). More information on the regulation of paramedics under the National Scheme can be accessed on the [AHPRA website](#).

Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee appointed

Late last year the Ministerial Council endorsed the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council Guidance for National Boards: *Applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law* (the Guidance).

The Guidance is published on the AHPRA website under [Ministerial directives and communiques](#). It provides information for National Boards about the process for, and content of, an application to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsement for scheduled medicines for a health profession under section 14 of the National Law.

Consistent with the Guidance, AHPRA has established a Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee (Expert Committee) whose role is to advise National Boards on the use of scheduled medicines generally, and on matters relevant to a National Board's proposal for a new scheduled medicines endorsement or an amendment to an existing scheduled medicines endorsement.

Following a call for applications, AHPRA is pleased to announce the following appointments to the Expert Committee:

- Professor Anne Tonkin, Chair
- Ms Vanessa Brotto, core member
- Dr Susan Hunt, core member
- Professor Lisa Nissen, core member
- Ms Sarah Spagnardi, core member

Information about the Expert Committee, including the terms of reference, is available on the AHPRA website.

Co-Chairs announced to help lead the way for the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

The National Scheme is pleased to announce the appointment of co-Chairs for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia have been appointed as co-Chairs of the group.

The strategy group has been brought together to develop the National Scheme's first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA, the 14 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations

have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: *Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips was nominated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations to be co-Chair. Gregory Phillips is from the Waanyi and Jaru peoples, and comes from Cloncurry and Mount Isa in North-West Queensland. Dr Joanna Flynn was nominated by leaders of the National Scheme to be co-Chair.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips and Dr Flynn agree that partnerships are fundamental in this work.

'With more than 700,000 Australians registered by the National Boards and a commitment from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders and the National Scheme to work collaboratively there is a unique opportunity for real change to the health outcomes of all Australians,' said Associate Professor Phillips.

'We are grateful for the strong relationships we have with our partners in this work, particularly the expert guidance we have received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders. This work cannot be done with National Boards acting in isolation and I am looking forward to making this new strategy a reality through my role as co-Chair,' said Dr Flynn.

Further information

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

The next meeting of the strategy group will be held in November 2017.

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 (New South Wales), 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 relating 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 is in 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.

Keep in touch with the Board

As always, we encourage dental practitioners to regularly check the [Dental Board website](#) for information and updates relating to the dental profession.

- Visit our website for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets. Board communiqués and consultation papers are published on the site under [News](#).
- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Executive Officer, Dental Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.
- AHPRA state and territory office locations are listed on the [AHPRA website](#).

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