



Communiqué

55th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia – 29 August 2014

The Dental Board of Australia (the National Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

This communiqué highlights key discussions and considerations from the National Board's August 2014 meeting.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme 2014 combined meeting

The National Board meeting was held to coincide with the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting.

The combined meeting encourages learning through sharing ideas, innovation and networking. The goal is to help us to better understand and respond to our wider regulatory and reform environment.

The combined meeting was attended by members of all of the National Boards, the National Board's Registration and Notification Committees (RNCs), NSW Councils representatives, the Agency Management Committee, AHPRA staff and other partners including representatives of the Australian Dental Council and Dental Council of New Zealand.

The Chairs of the RNCs, or their representative, also attended the National Board meeting.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme – 3 year review

Health Ministers have initiated a scheduled review on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The independent consultation paper for the three year review of the National Scheme has been published and is considering the National Scheme as a whole including the work of National Boards, AHPRA, accrediting entities and the role of governments.

The consultation paper can be accessed [here](#) and is open until 10 October.

The review team expects to make its recommendations early in 2015, which will then be subject to final decisions by all health ministers.

The National Board will be actively participating in the consultation and review process, while continuing our existing work to improve our performance across all aspects of the work of AHPRA and the National Board.

Scope of practice forums

The National Board has now concluded a series of forums for dental practitioners which were held in each state and territory. The main focus of these forums was the revised [Scope of practice registration standard](#) and new [Guidelines for scope of practice](#), which came into effect on **30 June 2014**. The forums were conducted to assist dental practitioners learn more about the standard and guidelines and how they affect practice.

The [FAQ](#) on the standard and guidelines will be revised shortly with questions that are raised at the forums.

The National Board is also developing a webinar to assist dental practitioners who were unable to attend the forums.

Code of conduct

The National Board would like to remind dental practitioners of their professional responsibility to be familiar with the *Code of conduct* and the guidance it contains.

The [Code of conduct](#) seeks to assist and support registered health practitioners to deliver effective regulated health services within an ethical framework. Practitioners have a duty to make the care of patients or clients their first concern and to practise safely and effectively. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and conduct is essential for good care.

The code contains important standards for practitioner behaviour in relation to:

- providing good care, including shared decision-making
- working with patients or clients
- working with other practitioners
- working within the healthcare system
- minimising risk
- maintaining professional performance
- professional behaviour and ethical conduct
- ensuring practitioner health
- teaching, supervising and assessing, and
- research.

This code seeks to assist and support practitioners to deliver appropriate, effective services within an ethical framework.

Registration fees for dental practitioners for 2014/15

The National Board has [announced](#) the national registration fee for dental practitioners for 2014/15.

The fee will apply from 9 September 2014, and cover the registration period for most practitioners of 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2015.

The National Board limited increasing the fee to 2.9%, which is under the national consumer price index (CPI), so that the National Board can continue to provide robust and safe regulation of dental practitioners in Australia and to protect the public.

Setting the new schedule of fees ensures that the Board can continue its work in implementing the requirements set out in the National Law through registering dental practitioners, setting professional standards and investigating notifications.

More detailed information about the National Board's financial operations will be outlined in the Health Profession Agreement between the National Board and AHPRA for 2014/15, which will be published on the website soon. This agreement sets out the partnership between the National Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide to support the Board to regulate dental practice.

Have your say: National Boards consult on practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases

All 14 National Boards are inviting practitioners, members of the community and other stakeholders to provide feedback on guidelines that will determine how, from a regulatory perspective, health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases should be managed.

Under the proposed guidelines, registered health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases must comply with the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA) guidelines on this issue to ensure their practice does not compromise patient safety.

The CDNA offers strategic advice to governments and other key bodies on public health actions to minimise the impact of communicable diseases, and their [*Australian national guidelines for the management of health care workers known to be infected with blood-borne viruses*](#) are endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council.

The National Boards' proposed guidelines allow health practitioners infected with a blood-borne virus to practise their profession if they comply with the CDNA guidelines. However, they may have to modify their practice. For example, they will not be able to perform certain procedures such as exposure-prone procedures if the CDNA guidelines stop them from doing so.

The current CDNA guidelines define an exposure prone procedure as a procedure where there is a risk of injury to the healthcare worker resulting in exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the worker. These procedures include those where the worker's hands (whether gloved or not) may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times.

The National Boards have published a [consultation paper](#) to support the draft guidelines. The consultation is open until 26 September 2014.

Contact details

Please check your contact details lodged with AHPRA through the Your account tab on the top right of the AHPRA website.

To check your contact details, follow the link, use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have your User ID, complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry or by calling 1300 419 495.

Email accounts should be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

John Lockwood AM
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
9 September 2014