



Communiqué

March 2016

The 72nd meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 18 March in the Queensland Office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in Brisbane. We met earlier than usual because of the Easter break.

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 widely to colleagues and interested parties. This includes distributing it to the different levels in the organisation that you work in.

Changes to how we manage specialist registration applications from overseas-trained practitioners

Under the National Scheme¹ the Australian Dental Council (ADC) has assessed overseas specialist qualifications for substantial equivalence to an Australian specialist program, on behalf of the Board. This was done using a peer assessment panel. AHPRA has managed the rest of the process for these applications.

From **1 July 2016** we will use a new process to carry out these assessments. The applications will be managed entirely in-house. This means AHPRA will manage the complete application on behalf of the Board, including convening the assessment panel.

A transition period is now in place until this date. We will continue to update our [specialist registration page](#) as we move to the new process.

We are currently seeking expressions of interests from suitably qualified and experienced registered dental specialists to sit on assessment panels for the Board. Further information is available in a [news item](#) on our website.

A reminder of your obligations to other regulators

There are a range of obligations that dental practitioners need to consider in their practice.

The Board describes our requirements of dental practitioners in the registration standards, codes and guidelines published on our website. We expect dental practitioners to also be aware of and to practise in accordance with the requirements of other regulators and legislative requirements in the state or territory that they practise in.

Infection prevention and control is one area where different requirements may apply.

The chief health officer of Queensland's Department of Health has written to the Board asking that we communicate the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2005 (Qld)* (the Act) as it relates to infection control in dental practices. The Act requires owners/operators of healthcare facilities, including dental practices, to have an infection control management plan (ICMP) in place.

Further information and resources in relation to ICMPs are available on the Queensland Health [website](#).

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

Consultation on proposed international accreditation standards and competencies for dentists

The International Society of Dental Regulators (ISDR) provides a forum for the development and sharing of new concepts and approaches in the regulation of dental practice.

ISDR is now consulting with stakeholders on proposed international accreditation standards for dentistry programs and the competencies for dentists. Feedback is invited and will be considered to inform the final drafts to be considered by ISDR at its next General Meeting in May 2016. The consultation document is available on the ISDR [website](#).

National awareness campaign

You may have seen the beginning of the AHPRA national awareness campaign. **Know your obligations**, the first of three phases, directed at employers of health practitioners, launched at the close of last year. The message has been shared over social media through targeted ads resulting in a doubling of our online community.

The next phase of the campaign is targeted at practitioners. Under the headline of **The not-so-small print**, practitioners are encouraged to stay up to date with regulation changes as they occur, and to be aware of their obligations as registered health practitioners. Advertisements have been published this month across a mix of social media, industry publications and newsletters.

The final phase will be directed at the public to increase awareness of the [national register of practitioners](#).

Publications considered by the Board

From time to time we consider reports that relate to the practice of dentistry. We consider how these reports or publications impact on our role in regulating the dental profession.

On 24 February 2016, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care released the *Guide to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards* for community health services to support community health services implementing the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

Further information on this guide is available on the Commission's [website](#).

Engagement with stakeholders

Over recent weeks we have had the chance to meet with some of our professional association colleagues to discuss a range of issues related to the work of the Board and to get feedback on the work of the National Scheme. We have also sought feedback from all associations on items that their members need clarification on. We will address these in upcoming issues of our newsletter.

We will continue these meetings throughout the year.

Are your contact details up to date?

Throughout the year we need to send you important information related to your registration. We will be sending out the latest version of our newsletter in coming weeks.

So that you receive this information you need to check that we have your correct contact details.

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.

John Lockwood AM
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
29 March 2016