



## Communiqué

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### April 2018 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 95<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 27 April 2018 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.

#### Update on revalidation and 'professional assurance' for dental practitioners

The Board has been considering the relevance and appropriateness of revalidation for dental practitioners.

As part of this, the Board used a working definition of revalidation as 'a process for dental practitioners, to regularly show that they are up to date and fit to practice dentistry, giving patients and the community the assurance that the practitioner is competent.'

While different aspects of revalidation were discussed at the [Board's roundtable with stakeholders on 26 October 2017](#), the Board has not yet decided to adopt any specific approach to revalidation. The Board remains interested in understanding more about revalidation models for dental practitioners in the Australian context.

The Board understand that using the term 'revalidation', in an Australian context, can be confronting for practitioners. With this in mind the Board prefers the term 'professional assurance'.

Over the next three years, the Board will explore ways to support dental practitioners to maintain and enhance their professional skills and knowledge and remain fit to practise.

The challenge facing the Board is to decide if the current requirements and processes in place for practitioners are sufficiently robust to ensure ongoing competency while adequately protecting the public.

The Board plans to commission research to identify the characteristics of 'at risk' and poorly performing dental practitioners. This research will also consider the types of support needed to make sure dental practitioners keep their skills up to date throughout their professional lives.

The research will help inform the Board's future direction and decision-making about dental practitioner professional assurance and ensure it is effective, evidence-based and practical. This research will be conducted over the next 12 months.

#### For more information

- Read the Board's [registration standards](#) for dental practitioners.
- Read the Board's [communiqué](#) about Board's roundtable discussion.
- Visit the Board's [website](#) and read about the professional assurance project.

## Consultation on a proposed revised *Scope of practice registration standard and Guidelines for scope of practice*

Public consultation has commenced and will close soon.

We're interested in what you think of the Board's proposed changes to *Scope of practice registration standard and Guidelines for scope of practice*.

Public consultation is an important part of the Board's engagement with the profession. The feedback you provide is greatly valued and informs the Board's development of regulatory documents.

The Board's scope of practice public consultation paper is published on the Board's website under [Current Consultations](#).

You are invited to provide feedback by email to [dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au) by close of business on **14 May 2018**.

## Consultation on the draft guideline for informing a National Board about where you practise

In September 2017, the Queensland Parliament passed the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*.

The Bill contained a set of amendments to the National Law<sup>1</sup> except Western Australia. Corresponding legislation has also been passed in Western Australia.

These amendments include changes to the information a registered health practitioner is required to provide about their practice arrangements when requested by the National Board (referred to as 'practice information').

The draft guideline has been developed to help registered health practitioners provide practice information in a way that meets their obligation under the National Law.

The consultation paper is available under [Current consultations](#) on the Board's website and the Board invites feedback from practitioners, stakeholders and the community by close of business on **25 May 2018**.

## Public consultation on review of accreditation arrangements – assignment of accreditation functions

National Boards and AHPRA are consulting on future accreditation arrangements from mid-2019, when the current term of assignment of accreditation functions ends.

Public consultation has started and will close at **12pm on Monday 14 May 2018**.

The National Law sets out the accreditation functions in the National Scheme<sup>2</sup>; these include developing accreditation standards, accrediting programs of study against approved accreditation standards and assessing overseas-qualified practitioners.

It is each National Board's decision as to whether the accreditation functions for the profession it regulates will be carried out by an external accreditation body or a committee established by the Board. If the National Board decides on an external organisation, AHPRA enters into a contract with them which specifies the scope of accreditation functions and sets out associated reporting requirements and funding arrangements. If the National Board decides on a committee, these matters are specified in terms of reference.

National Boards will take feedback into account when making decisions about the assignment of accreditation functions from mid-2019. Feedback will also be considered in the next phase of the review, which will involve establishing new agreements with external accreditation authorities and terms of reference for accreditation committees.

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<sup>1</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

<sup>2</sup> National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The consultation paper is available under [Consultations](#), on the AHPRA website, along with information about the publishing of submissions to the consultation. The National Boards and AHPRA invite feedback from practitioners, stakeholders and the community.

You can provide feedback using **one** of the following options:

- Complete the [survey](#) by **12pm on 14 May 2018** OR
- Email a submission marked 'Scheduled review of accreditation assignments' to [accreditationreview@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:accreditationreview@ahpra.gov.au) by **12pm on 14 May 2018**.

### **Vexing not vexatious: Report finds more risk in not reporting**

New independent research commissioned by AHPRA takes a first international look at vexatious complaints, finding there is more risk from people not reporting concerns than from making dubious complaints.

It also found that while being on the receiving end of a complaint is tough – the complaint is much more likely to be vexing than vexatious.

The report will be used to inform best practice for reducing, identifying, and managing vexatious complaints and helps to identify opportunities to work with others to help reduce their frequency and adverse consequences.

For further information read the research summary report: [Reducing, indentifying and managing vexatious complaints on the AHPRA website](#).

### **Read about progress on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy**

The health strategy group charged with developing the National Scheme's first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy has held its first meeting for 2018 and will publish its latest communiqué soon.

AHPRA, the 15 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, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting, and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. 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.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a *Reconciliation Action Plan* for AHPRA.

The next meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group is scheduled for July 2018.

### **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](http://www.dentalboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://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**  
4 May 2018