



## Communiqué

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

The 98<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 29 July 2018 at the National Office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

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.

#### **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 who 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 Law.
- 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.

#### **Advertising – selectively editing reviews or testimonials may break the law**

AHPRA has issued more guidance for advertisers to make it clearer that selectively editing reviews is not acceptable.

Under the National Law<sup>1</sup>, testimonials about clinical care are not permitted, but reviews about non-clinical aspects of care are allowed.

In a recent case, an advertiser removed all negative comments from patients' reviews. This selective editing changed the meaning of the reviews and had the potential to mislead the public. AHPRA's new

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

guidance makes it clear this is not acceptable and outlines the rules about editing or moderating reviews. It is misleading to:

- edit a review that is negative to make it positive, as this falsely presents the feedback
- edit a review that has a mix of negative and positive comments so that the published review only has positive comments, as this falsely implies that the reviewer only had positive feedback, or
- edit a review so that it no longer accurately reflects all the reviewer's feedback and presents an inaccurate or false impression of the reviewer's views.

Reviews influence consumers healthcare choices so advertisers must make sure reviews are genuine and not misleading.

The way advertisers moderate and publish reviews must comply with the National Law and the [Australian Consumer Law](#).

The updated [testimonial tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section on the AHPRA website.

For more information, access the [Advertising resources](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **Call for applications for appointment to the List of Approved Persons for panels**

Applications are being sought from health practitioners who hold registration with one of the 15 regulated health professions as well as active and engaged consumers or community advisors.

The appointment of panel members is in accordance with s183 (2) of the National Law and to the extent practicable, will not include individuals whose residence or principal place of practice is NSW due to the co-regulatory system in NSW.

To view the vacancy and submit an application, please visit the [Panel member recruitment page](#).

### **Closing the gap - Closing the gap by 2031: a shared commitment**

The National Scheme has made a landmark commitment to helping achieve equity in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians to close the gap by 2031.

Nearly 40 health organisations have signed the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Statement of Intent, including leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, AHPRA, all National Boards, all accreditation authorities and other entities.

AHPRA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group is leading this work, in close partnership with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and experts.

The group shares a commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have access to health services that are culturally safe and free from racism so that they can enjoy a healthy life,

To help achieve this, the group is focusing on:

- a culturally safe health workforce supported by nationally consistent standards, codes and guidelines across all professions in the National Scheme
- using our leadership and influence to achieve reciprocal goals
- increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' participation in the registered health workforce
- greater access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to culturally safe services of health professions regulated under the National Scheme, and
- increased participation across all levels of the National Scheme.

More information is available in the [news item](#), the [Statement of Intent](#) and [AHPRA's Reconciliation Action Plan](#).

### **True partnership recognised through AHPRA and Victoria Police MOU**

AHPRA and Victoria Police have announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enable greater cooperation which will see the public better protected.

The MOU is the first of its kind between AHPRA and a police force. It recognises the cooperation already in place between the two agencies. It establishes procedures for timely and appropriate information sharing, within the law, where AHPRA or Victoria Police discover certain information in the course of their investigations.

The MOU provides a mechanism for the release of information by AHPRA when it identifies information relating to criminal offences, including physical harm, sexual offending, production of exploitative material and/or drug offences.

Victoria Police will also be better placed to share information with AHPRA about practitioners who they suspect may pose a risk of substantial harm to the public or individuals posing as registered health practitioners when they are not.

The agreement lays out detailed security protocols around the transmission, storage, use and disclosure of information that is shared between Victoria Police and AHPRA.

The MOU recognises the learning that came from the [Chaperone Review](#), a report into the use of chaperones to protect patients. The report stated that where there are allegations of indecent or sexual assault there needed to be greater clarity around whether AHPRA contacts the police or relies on the notifier (the person who makes the complaint) to do so.

The report also considered it was important that AHPRA was kept aware of developments in police investigations, which may trigger the need to review risk and take immediate action on a registered health practitioner's ability to practise their profession.

For more information, see the [media release](#) 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](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**  
17 August 2018