



Communiqué

February 2019 meeting of the Dental Board of Australia

The 104th meeting of the Dental Board of Australia (the Board) was held on Friday 1 March at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme 2019 combined meeting

The National Board meeting was held on 1 March 2019 to coincide with the annual National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) combined meeting where entities in the scheme got together to discuss the focus for the next 12 months.

Representatives of the Australian Dental Council, the Dental Council of New South Wales and Dental Council of New Zealand attended the meeting.

National Boards and AHPRA host research summit

The National Scheme 2019 Research Summit took place on 27 February 2019 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The Summit centred on asking how research can be harnessed to strengthen regulation and enhance patient safety to contribute to improved health outcomes.

Led by AHPRA and the National Boards, the all-day Research Summit hosted 17 speakers and drew more than 300 participants from National and State/Territory Board and Committee members, AHPRA staff, co-regulatory bodies, representatives from accreditation authorities and key partners.

With the theme *Optimising research for regulatory effectiveness*, the Research Summit explored the National Scheme's evolving approaches to risk assessment, lessons from research into notifications, and future opportunities to utilise smart data. At the heart of discussions was asking how we can use data and research to improve regulatory processes and ultimately contribute to safer care for patients.

From the University of Toronto, Professor Zubin Austin's stirring keynote address highlighted that competency assessment has emerged as a dominant issue for regulators, educators and employers worldwide; Professor Austin called for more attention on notions of teamwork, emotional intelligence, and genuine practitioner engagement as important concepts in defining and evaluating competency.

Read more in the [media release](#) about the summit.

Honour for Chair of the Board's Victoria Registration and Notification Committee

The Board congratulates Dr Werner Bischof, Chair of the Victoria Registration and Notification Committee of the Board for his award in the Australia Day Honours List 2019.

Dr Bischof was awarded a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day honours. The Board applauds Dr Bischof's service to dentistry, and as part of that, his significant contribution to the work of the Board.

Dental regulation at work: Protecting the public in 2017/18

A profession-specific annual report summary that looks at the work of the Board over the year to 30 June 2018 has now been published.

Insights into the profession include:

- 23,093 dental practitioners were registered in 2017/18.
- 1,660 new applications for registration were received.
- Dental practitioners make up 3.3% of all registered health practitioners in Australia.
- The number of dental practitioners increased by 3.2% from 2016/17.
- 51.2% dental practitioners are women; 48.8% are men.
- New South Wales (NSW) was the principal place of practice for most dental practitioners (6,981).
- Northern Territory (NT) was home to the smallest number (168).
- The age bracket with the largest number of dental practitioners was 30–34 (3,598).
- 556 dental practitioners were under 25 years of age.
- 67 were aged 80 or over.
- 539 notifications (complaints or concerns) were lodged with AHPRA about dental practitioners.
- AHPRA closed 554 notifications about dental practitioners in 2017/18. This represented 7.8% of all matters closed across the 15 professions in the National Scheme.
- 123 cases were being monitored by AHPRA at 30 June 2018 for compliance with conditions placed on dental practitioners' registration.
- Immediate action was considered by the Board 17 times and taken 10 times in 2017/18.
- 55 complaints were made about possible statutory offences by dental practitioners during the year. The majority of new matters related to title and practice protection.

To download this report, or to view the main 2017/18 annual report and summary reports by state or territory, visit the [AHPRA website](#).

Regulatory action

A registered dentist in Victoria has been reprimanded by a tribunal after being found to have engaged in professional misconduct.

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (the tribunal) heard that in September 2015 AHPRA received a notification from a patient who had undergone dental implant surgery performed by Dr Vinoth Arumugam.

On 1 March 2016, the Board took immediate action by accepting an undertaking from the dental practitioner to not provide surgical implant treatment until he was approved to do so by the Board. After it had completed its investigation the Board referred the matter to the tribunal on 9 November 2016.

Then in May 2017, the practitioner admitted to the Board that:

- his treatment plan was deficient in that he did not fully appreciate the complexities of the case, and
- the outcome of the surgery was not satisfactory, and the implants were not positioned correctly.

The tribunal reprimanded the dental practitioner 'in light of the array of significant and alarming shortcomings with the procedure,' and required Dr Arumugam to complete a graduate diploma level course covering implant dentistry, and any other education required by the Board.

Once he has completed the further training, Dr Arumugam will need to be supervised by a more qualified and experienced dental practitioner for at least 12 months when performing dental implant surgery and have a limit of three dental implants per patient.

Read the full decision on the [tribunal website](#) and the tribunal summary on the [Board's website](#).

Quarterly registration data released

The National Board has released its quarterly registration data. Read the latest report and other statistics on its [Statistics page](#).

‘Let’s talk about it’ videos launched

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has [launched a series of new videos](#) to support the public and registered health practitioners as they go through the notification process.

The video series, called ‘Let’s talk about it’, explains what happens when concerns are raised with the regulator, provides easy to follow information about the notifications process and addresses common questions, so consumers and health practitioners know what to expect when they interact with AHPRA and National Boards.

The videos are:

- [A notification has been made about me](#) features five health practitioners who work within the scheme, directed at health practitioners who have had a notification made about them.
- [I have a concern, am I in the right place?](#) is targeted at members of the public who have a concern but aren’t yet sure whether AHPRA is the right place for them to raise it.
- [I have raised a concern with AHPRA](#) provides information for individuals who have just raised a concern with AHPRA.

The videos sit alongside other written resources available on our website, see: www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications.

Practitioners can view the videos on the AHPRA and National Board websites or from their [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) channel and can join the conversation by following AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) and use the hashtag #letstalkaboutit and tag @AHPRA.

Legislative amendments on mandatory reporting and fake practitioners

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (Qld) (the Bill) has now been passed by the Queensland Parliament. The amendments include revisions to the mandatory reporting requirements for treating practitioners and an extension of sanctions for statutory offences.

The changes to the National Law intend to support registered practitioners to seek help for a health issue (including mental health issues). They will also increase the penalties (including the introduction of custodial sentences) for some offences under the National Law, including where a person holds themselves out to be a registered health practitioner when they are not.

AHPRA and National Boards will now work to implement these amendments. This will require working closely with professional bodies, employers and state and territory health departments to help spread the message that practitioners should be supported to seek help about their health issues.

The passing of the Bill in Queensland marks the second set of legislative amendments to the National Law since the start of the National Scheme in 2010.

When commenced, the amendments will apply in all states and territories except Western Australia, where mandatory reporting requirements will not change.

Practitioners can read a news item about the amendments on the [AHPRA website](#) or the Bill on the [Queensland Legislation 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 or 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.

Dr Murray Thomas
Chair, Dental Board of Australia
6 March 2019