



THIRD MEETING OF THE PHYSIOTHERAPY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA 20 NOVEMBER 2009

The third meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia was held on 20 November 2009 at the Hilton Melbourne Airport. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

The Board noted progress with implementation of the new national scheme. With respect to the legislative program the Board is pleased that:

- the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* ('Bill B') has been passed without amendment by the Queensland Parliament and is due to commence on 1 July 2010 (this also covers adoption of the National Law for Queensland)
- in NSW the National Law has passed both houses of Parliament without amendment, and
- in Victoria the National Law has passed the lower house without amendment.

As in previous meetings, in its third meeting the Board focussed on the matters it had to resolve to enable the scheme to commence on 1 July 2010. The Board gave further consideration to matters of budget in order that the Board's first Agreement with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation agency (AHPRA) can be prepared. The Agreement will address matters including the fees that will be payable under the scheme by physiotherapists, the annual budget of the Board, including its committees and the services to be provided to the Board by the Agency to enable the Board to carry out its functions under the scheme.

The Board also further considered a budget for 2009-10 in light of the Agency's need to commence employing staff and leasing premises for the new State and Territory and national offices. The Board will continue to work with the Agency on this matter. The Board noted that recruitment to senior positions in the national Agency, (including the Director Registration, Director Corporate Services, Director National Board Services, Chief Finance Officer and State and Territory Managers) is progressing and remains on track.

The Board also considered its budget for 2010-11 and will give further consideration to this at future meetings, following the outcome of the registration migration process that will confirm final registrant numbers, and due diligence processes that will confirm reserves that will be transferred from existing State and Territory boards.

The Board recognised that it will need a strong financial base going forward. The Board is aware that many current State and Territory boards have excess funds above and beyond the one year's operating budget minimum that is to be transferred to the national scheme. Accordingly, the Board is encouraging all current State and Territory Physiotherapist Registration Boards to transfer the maximum amount of reserves possible to support the ongoing work of the national board and to minimise future fees for registrants.

The Board discussed progress with the consultation on the Board's proposals for registration standards and other matters that were posted on the Agency's website (www.ahpra.gov.au) on 27 October 2009. The Board also considered the consultation papers from all other boards. The Board noted trends in responses to the paper received so far and the response received from the Governance Committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.

The consultation closes on 24 November 2009, and the Board is keen to consider the feedback provided by stakeholders. At its December meeting, the Board will consider revised draft registration standards, and complete this work in order to submit the registration standards to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval.

The Board acknowledges the tight timetable for completion of this work. The timetable is necessary so that all registrants can have advice ahead of commencement day on 1 July 2010 of the new registration standards and requirements.

The Board discussed a draft code of conduct for the profession, and considered a range of issues concerning its content and whether such a code might be developed to apply commonly to all or more than one of the regulated health professions. The Board agreed to consider this again at its December meeting, with a view to releasing a draft code for public consultation in February 2010.

The Board gave consideration to what other codes and guidelines might be needed for the profession on commencement of the national scheme. The Board agreed to work with other boards on the development of guidelines covering mandatory reporting obligations under the National Law, and advertising of practitioner services. The Board expects to give consideration to drafts of these guidelines at its December meeting. The Board also agreed a timetable for development of additional codes and guidelines specific to the Board, with drafts to be considered at its February 2010 meeting. The Board agreed that it would release its proposed draft codes and guidelines for public consultation on 5 March 2010.

The Board considered progress with the establishment of the Registration and Notification Management Information System, to support the Board's functions, and provided the Agency with a number of suggestions about system functionality.

The Board considered a number of other administrative and financial matters, including possible fees for those who undertake work as members of committees or panels of the Board.

The Board acknowledged the continuing efforts of existing State and Territory boards in preparing for implementation of the national scheme, as well as accrediting bodies, AHPRA and the National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project team. The Board looks forward to continued joint effort in coming months.

Glenn Ruscoe
Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia
24 November 2009