

Communiqué

The 74th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 27 May 2016 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) National Office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting, and other points of interest.

We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

May meeting

During its meeting on 27 May 2016, the Board received reports from and progressed matters raised through its committees. It also addressed a number of AHPRA and National Scheme-related matters, including approving its budget for 2016-17.

The Board acknowledged the recent death of pioneer physiotherapy regulator Pat Cosh. Pat was the first physiotherapist to chair the Victorian Physiotherapy Registration Board and one of its longest serving members, dedicating her career to the protection of the public through physiotherapy regulation.

Physiotherapy practice thresholds for Australia and Aetearoa New Zealand (Physiotherapy practice thresholds)

Readers may remember that in 2015, the Physiotherapy Board of Australia and the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand launched their jointly developed Physiotherapy practice thresholds. The practice thresholds describe the threshold level of practice for entry to the physiotherapy profession in Australia and Aetearoa New Zealand and replace the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy (2006) in Australia.

Both Boards are now pleased to approve a request from the Fiji Physiotherapy Association to adopt the thresholds, adapting them as required for their cultural situation.

The threshold statements are available on the [accreditation](#) section of the Board's website.

Responsible advertising

The Board would like to remind all registered physiotherapists that you must comply with the provisions of the National Law on the advertising of regulated health services, relevant consumer protection legislation, and state and territory fair trading Acts and, if applicable, legislation regulating the advertising of therapeutic goods.

Good practice also involves ensuring that any promotion of therapeutic products is ethical.

All practitioners must be familiar with the *Code of conduct* and *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services* (the guidelines). The guidelines provide any person who advertises a regulated health service or business that provides a regulated health service with guidance on the obligations of advertisers under the National Law.

The National Law bans specific types of advertising, including (but not limited to) advertising in a way that:

- a. makes misleading claims
- b. offers an inducement such as a gift or discount (unless the relevant terms and conditions are also included)
- c. uses testimonials, and/or
- d. creates unreasonable expectations of beneficial treatment, or encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of a service.

The Board would encourage you to check your website against the banned types of advertising to avoid any inadvertent breaches of the National Law.

Quarterly performance reports released

AHPRA and the National Boards, including the Physiotherapy Board, have released new information about their performance in each state and territory to improve transparency and accountability.

The comprehensive information and data has been published on the [AHPRA website](#) to help the community and health practitioners better understand what AHPRA and the National Boards do and how.

The quarterly performance reports include data specific to each state and territory for the period October to December 2015 and covers AHPRA and the National Boards' main areas of activity in implementing the National Scheme.

Family and domestic violence – Queensland and Victoria state reports released

The Board is committed to being part of the solution to major health and social problems as best we can within our mandate as a regulator of physiotherapists.

Everyone should feel safe at home. Tragically, many people across Australia face great danger at home from the people closest to them. Family violence can affect anyone, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity or sexuality and it not only impacts on victims, but also their family, friends and the wider society. Health practitioners who often work closely with families could also be in the right place at the right time to help families who fall victim to such violence.

The Board wants to make physiotherapists aware of two significant reports recently released on this issue, including one in Queensland and one in Victoria.

The Queensland Government commissioned a special taskforce to conduct an inquiry into domestic and family violence in Queensland. The Taskforce's report '[Not Now Not Ever - putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland](#)' made 140 recommendations to Queensland and national bodies, including three to the National Scheme.

In Victoria, the Royal Commission into Family Violence released its [report and recommendations](#) on how Victoria's response to family violence can be improved. The Commission's 227 recommendations are directed at improving the foundations of the current system, seizing opportunities to transform the way that we respond to family violence, and building the structures that will guide and oversee a long-term reform program that deals with all aspects of family violence. Though there were no specific recommendations directed towards AHPRA or National Boards, several referenced the important role the health system and health professional bodies have to play in influencing child safeguarding and in improving the accreditation and training for health practitioners in this area.

Revised standard for recency of practice

The Board has published a [revised registration standard for recency of practice](#) which will come into effect on 1 December 2016 and replace the current standard. This standard will apply to all registered physiotherapists except those with non-practising registration.

The key change is that a requirement for minimum hours of practice has been introduced. Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standard by the time they renew their registration in 2017.

Top tips for using the register

The [register of practitioners](#) is core to the work of AHPRA and the National Boards because it provides up-to-date information about every registered health practitioner, including physiotherapists. To help the public and employers get the most out of the register, we have developed [these tips](#). In particular, the tips remind anyone responsible for recruiting health practitioners how to use the register to verify a practitioner's registration status.

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.

Follow @AHPRA on Twitter

AHPRA uses [Twitter](#) to encourage greater discussion about National Board consultations and to host regular Twitter chats on important topics.

Conclusion

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of registered physiotherapists on our website at www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more information or help with questions about your registration, please send a web enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Charles Flynn

Presiding member
3 June 2016