

## Communiqué

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### October 2016 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 79th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 October 2016 in the South Australian AHPRA office.

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.

#### Student physiotherapists

In its role in protecting the public, the Board reminds physiotherapists and others of issues that may arise when employing or engaging physiotherapy students in work outside their program of study setting (e.g. students being employed to provide massage at sporting events not associated with clinical placements). It must be made clear to any member of the public that the student is not a registered physiotherapist. There could be serious implications for both the employer and the student if this is the case. These include, but are not limited to, professional conduct, holding out as a physiotherapist or giving the impression of being a physiotherapist when a person is a physiotherapy student, adequate professional indemnity insurance considerations, supervision and competence.

#### Graduate applications for registration: Final-year students can apply online now

Physiotherapy students who will soon complete an approved program of study can go online now to apply for registration before they graduate.

Graduates need to be registered as a physiotherapist with the Board before they start practising and must meet the Board's registration requirements.

The [online graduate application](#) service on the AHPRA website helps to smooth the path from study to work by enabling students to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. All applicants must send some [supporting documents](#) to AHPRA by mail to complete their application.

#### Australian Health Ministers' communiqués published

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council has published two communiqués after its most recent meeting, one highlighting the main topics of discussion at the recent COAG Health Council meeting and a second announcing the start of the reviewer for the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Go to the [COAG Health Council website](#) to access this information.

#### More information about your advertising obligations

National Boards across the National Scheme continued to discuss issues about claims in advertising, in particular claims about benefits of treatments.

The Board would like to remind all practitioners that they must comply with the provisions of the National Law on the advertising of regulated health services, relevant national, state and territory consumer protection legislation and, if applicable, legislation regulating the advertising of therapeutic goods.

The Board has published further information on its [website](#) to help physiotherapists better understand their advertising obligations, including [Further information on advertising therapeutic claims](#).

This information does not replace the Board's [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#) which should be physiotherapist's first point of reference to understanding their obligations.

The burden is on you to substantiate any claim you make that your treatments benefit patients. If you do not understand whether the claims you have made can be substantiated based on acceptable evidence, then remove them from your advertising.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is responsible for prosecuting breaches of the advertising requirements in the National Law. This means that AHPRA with the Board needs to decide whether there has been a breach of your advertising obligations.

These are serious matters that can have serious consequences for your professional standing and your criminal record: **if in doubt about a claim, leave it out of your advertising.**

### Registration renewal is due soon

The Board reminds physiotherapists to renew their registration by 30 November 2016, the registration expiry date for general and non-practising registration. Under the National Law, physiotherapists are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year. Renewal applications received within a month after the expiry date will incur a late fee.

If you haven't already received an email reminder notice from AHPRA, please check that your contact details are up to date (see below). Remember to renew before 30 November if you want to continue to practise. [Online renewal](#) is quick and easy.

There is a late fee for renewal applications received in December, which reflects the cost of managing late renewals.

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) if you do not renew your registration within one month of their registration expiry date you must be removed from the [Register of Practitioners](#). Your registration will lapse and you will not be able to practise in Australia until a new application for registration is approved.

If you have provided an email address to the Board or AHPRA you will have been sent email reminders. Paper reminders have also been sent to practitioners who have not yet renewed.

A video explaining how to renew registration online is available on the [Practitioner Services](#) page of the AHPRA website. More information is available on the Board's [website](#).

For more information:

- visit [Registration renewal](#)
- lodge an online enquiry form, or
- for registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (within Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers).

### Top tips for using the Register of practitioners

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 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](http://www.physiotherapyboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://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  
9 November 2016