

Communiqué

November 2017 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 89th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 18 November 2017 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.

Quarterly data profiling Australia's physiotherapy workforce published

The data for the June to September 2017 quarter was recently published on the Board's website under [About>Statistics](#). The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns.

At 30 September 2017, there were a total of 30,574 registered physiotherapists. Of these 29,320 held general registration; 392 held limited registration and 862 held non-practising registration.

New information for physiotherapists treating animals

The Board again wishes to remind physiotherapists that the National Law¹ aims to protect the health and safety of the Australian public. This does not extend to animals. Practising on animals, using the protected title of 'physiotherapist' or 'physical therapist' in relation to animal practice, can have serious implications for your registration.

If your practice is 100% animal-based, you cannot maintain general registration because you cannot meet the requirements for recent practice. The recency of practice requirements are 150 hours of practice in the previous registration year, or 450 hours over the previous three years – on humans.

Your options in this situation are to apply for non-practising registration, or surrender your registration.

Practitioners who are not sure should read the additional information published on the Board's [website](#) including newly published [FAQ](#).

AHPRA and National Boards release annual report

The Annual Report for the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards reveals how the Board has worked to protect the public in 2016/17. The report is a comprehensive record of the National Scheme for the 12 months to 30 June 2017.

Over the past year, registration with the Board grew by 5.2% to 30,351 registered physiotherapists. This contingent now comprises 4.5% of all health practitioners in the National Scheme, according to information published today in the annual report by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

For more information visit the [Annual Report microsite](#) on the AHPRA website or the Board's [news item](#) which shares a snapshot of the profession in 2016/17.

¹ The Health Practitioner National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Update on the Independent Accreditation Systems Review

In October 2016 health ministers commissioned Professor Michael Woods, former Productivity Commissioner, to carry out the Independent Accreditation Systems Review (the Review). Following public consultations Professor Woods has prepared [draft recommendations](#) for ministers. Many of the reforms in his draft report would, in their current form, require significant changes to our legislation and how we manage the accreditation of courses leading to registration as well as assessment of internationally-qualified practitioners.

In response to the draft recommendations, AHPRA and National Boards have published a joint submission to the Review on the [AHPRA website](#). In summary we propose that a more effective and efficient approach would be to make changes to the roles of AHPRA, National Boards and Accreditation Councils, rather than create new regulatory bodies with the likely cost and complexity this could create. We believe that this would deliver the changes required to support the professional health workforce required by Australia.

The joint submission includes additional responses from four participating National Boards – Chiropractic, Medical, Optometry and Psychology. The Pharmacy Board made a separate [submission](#) which is published on its website.

AHPRA and National Boards look forward to the Review's final report and health ministers' response in due course. A news item including a high level summary of key aspects of the joint submission has been published on the [AHPRA website](#).

Graduating soon? Need to register? Apply now

AHPRA is now calling for final-year students of physiotherapy to apply for registration online.

Those on the Student Register who will complete their [approved program of study](#) at the end of 2017 have been sent an email inviting them to [apply online](#) for registration four to six weeks before finishing their course.

Students are encouraged to read the information on AHPRA's website under [Graduate applications](#). Certain applicants will also need to apply for an [international criminal history check](#).

Remember the Board has a [short animation](#) to help physiotherapy graduates when they register for the first time.

The video aims to raise awareness among physiotherapy students and new graduates about the important role registering with the Board plays in providing safe and ethical care to patients.

Graduates can start practising as soon as their name is published on the [national register](#).

Registration renewal reminder

Physiotherapists must renew their registration by 30 November 2017. Those who don't will need to renew in the late renewal period and have until 31 December to apply. Applications received in December will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee. Practitioners who apply after 1 January must lodge a new application for registration.

Anyone who does not apply to renew their registration by 31 December 2017 will have lapsed registration. They will be removed from the national [Register of practitioners](#) and they will not be able to practise in Australia. A 'fast-track' application can be made, but the physiotherapist cannot practise until it is processed and the national register is updated, which can take time.

If you apply to renew during the late renewal period you can still practise even if:

- we are still processing your application to renew, and/or
- the registration expiry date displayed on the register has passed.

National regulation of paramedicine moves a step closer

The national regulation of paramedicine moves a step closer with the appointment of the first Paramedicine Board of Australia.

The Health Ministers made the announcement of the nine person board at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council meeting held on 19 October 2017. Paramedicine will be the first profession to be regulated under the National Scheme since 2012.

Registration of paramedicine is due to commence from late 2018. Paramedics will be able to register once and practise anywhere in Australia. The title 'paramedic' will also become a 'protected title' – only people registered with the Board will be able to call themselves a paramedic.

More information, including news about the implementation of the regulation of paramedics and the newly appointed Board members will be available on the Paramedicine Board of Australia's [website](#).

Board notes international research collaboration at seminar

AHPRA and the [Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\)](#), the United Kingdom's multi-professional health and social care regulator, met for a Research Seminar in November to target the issue of patient safety in practitioner regulation.

This was the largest research collaboration of its kind, with data for over one million registered health practitioners across both countries, providing a foundation for a stronger focus on how regulators of health practitioners can keep patients safer.

The joint research seminar looked at how AHPRA and National Boards learn from data to improve regulatory effectiveness, patient safety and professional standards internationally. Through engaging and collaborating with other regulators we can learn more and translate what we find into real action that puts patient safety first.

More than 148 people attended the seminar which showcased research updates in areas such as risk-based regulation to prevent harm and using behavioural insights in regulation. In attendance were international researchers, regulators, accreditation authorities and practitioners, all looking at ways in which research can help shape AHPRA and HCPC's regulatory policies, decision-making and compliance activities.

For more information

Interviews with those who attended the seminar, including HCPC CEO Marc Seale and AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher, are on the AHPRA [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

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 social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Further information

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
Chair
24 November 2017