

Communiqué

February 2018 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 91st meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board), the first for 2018, was held in February at the 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.

Late applications accepted for National Board vacancies

Late applications for practitioner member vacancies on the Physiotherapy Board will be accepted until 5pm on 9 March 2018.

The closing date has been extended to give registered practitioners a bit more time to express interest in being part of health practitioner regulation nationally. Physiotherapists from the Northern Territory and South Australia are especially encouraged to apply.

Triennial (three-yearly) recruitment rounds are an opportunity for Australian Health Ministers to consider reappointments and new appointments; so that National Boards have the best mix of experience, new and diverse views that will help inform their regulatory decision-making.

More information about the vacancies and how to apply is on the [AHPRA website](#).

Quarterly data profiling Australia's physiotherapy workforce published

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

At 31 December 2017, there were a total of 31,276 registered physiotherapists. Of these 29,703 held general registration, 419 held limited registration and 1,154 held non-practising registration.

Guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines released

AHPRA has released a guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines.

In 2016 the Ministerial Council endorsed the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's *Guidance for National Boards: Applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law* (the AHMAC Guidance).

The AHMAC Guidance endorsed by the Ministerial Council is available on the AHPRA [website](#).

To support the implementation of the Guidance, AHPRA has published a supporting *Guide for National Boards*. The AHPRA Guide supports National Boards when developing a submission to the Ministerial Council seeking approval of a new or amended endorsement in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law.

The AHPRA Guide may also help National Boards' stakeholders in understanding the complexity and rigor of the process of developing a proposal for endorsement for scheduled medicines for a profession, from concept development to Ministerial Council approval.

The AHPRA Guide is now available together with the AHMAC Guidance on the [Endorsement for scheduled medicines](#) section of the AHPRA website.

Both the AHMAC Guidance and the AHPRA Guide are two of the first steps in an important journey for the profession to consider whether it wishes to pursue prescribing rights. Of particular consideration is how this could occur without compromising the safety of the public, and whether it is a value proposition for the community.

Health ministers expect there to be a consistent approach applied across all regulated health professions, including physiotherapy. That means, that the Board and the profession cannot productively 'go it alone' in developing rules, including accreditation and registration standards. Any changes require cross-professional consideration and agreement. The Board looks forward to continuing the conversations with stakeholder to discuss the many and varied issues around physiotherapist prescribing.

Stakeholder engagement

At its annual planning session held this month, the Board made plans for priority work during 2018/19. The Board will be continuing its stakeholder engagement activities alongside scheduled board meetings. The next stakeholder event will be held in Perth, Western Australian in May and will include several rural and remote locations with physiotherapists invited to join us through videoconference as well others in person.

New research framework launched to improve patient safety

In January, National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) published a research framework to help transform health practitioner regulation to improve patient safety.

[A research framework for the National Scheme: Optimising our investment in research](#) sets out the research priorities and principles for National Boards and AHPRA to focus their research efforts.

The framework includes the priority research areas of: defining harms and risks related to the practice of regulated health professions, regulatory taxonomy or classification scheme, risk factors for complaints and/or poor practitioner performance, evidence for standards, codes and/or guidelines, evaluating regulatory interventions, stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, work readiness and workforce capacity and distribution.

It has been published to provide a solid base to facilitate risk-based research and evaluation activities, with a clear focus on translating the outcomes of research into initiatives that will inform regulatory policy development and decision-making to maximise the public benefit.

Update on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

AHPRA, the 15 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: 'Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.'

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting, and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for AHPRA.

The next meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group is scheduled for March 2018.

Self-assessment tool to help practitioners and advertisers

A new self-assessment tool to help practitioners and advertisers check and correct their advertising so it complies with their professional and legal obligations is available online.

The tool is easy to use and asks users to consider a number of questions about their advertising which can help them understand if it is in breach of the National Law. Advertisers' legal obligations are explained in the [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#).

The self-assessment tool is the latest in a series of [advertising resources](#) developed by AHPRA and National Boards for health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services to use to help them comply with the law.

Advertising responsibly and within the law supports patients to receive accurate and reliable information about healthcare services that helps them make informed decisions about their healthcare choices.

The [self-assessment tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section on the AHPRA website.

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

6 March 2018