

Communiqué

December 2018 meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia

The 100th meeting of the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board), was held on 14 December 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.

Physiotherapy Board of Australia – Registration and Notifications Committee

At its December meeting the Board reconsidered the Terms of reference (TOR) and membership of its Registration and Notifications Committee (RNC). The RNC is the Board's delegated authority to act on its behalf utilising various sections of the National Law¹, in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), to manage complaints and registration matters about individual practitioners and students.

The Board farewelled outgoing National Board and RNC practitioner member, Alison Bell. National Board practitioner member, Lachlan Mortimer, will be starting his first term on the RNC.

CLEAR Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium

Since its previous meeting, three members of the Board attended the Council of Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation Regional (CLEAR) symposium in Wellington, New Zealand. The symposium examined the approaches taken and mechanisms used by professional and occupational regulators to demonstrate that they are serving and protecting the public interest. The symposium first looked, in a more traditional sense, at the process and reporting of performance, and second by examining how regulators can move beyond current parameters to understand the larger influence they have on the community with their work.

Do you practise under the name published on the online Register of practitioners?

Governments recently consulted on possible changes to the National Law, which would allow the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards to publish on the online [Register of practitioners](#), the names that registered health practitioners use in practice and not just their legal name.

The national online *Register of practitioners* is a vital part of Australia's system of regulating physiotherapists to support patient safety. Each registered health profession publishes registration information about practitioners on the online register. The public and employers can look up the names of all health practitioners who are registered to practise. The register also provides important information about limits or restrictions placed on the way a registered health practitioner is allowed to practise.

The national online register must remain an authoritative and trusted source of information about health practitioners. Consumers rely on it for accurate and up to date information to inform their healthcare decision-making and employers rely on them to validate their employees' registration status.

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

AHPRA and the Board know physiotherapists practise the profession using a name that is different from their legally recognised name published on the register (an alias).

AHPRA has asked governments to consider changes to the National Law that would enable registered health practitioners to nominate one or more aliases to be recorded on the public register. Governments [recently consulted](#) on this, among a range of other possible amendments to the National Law.

AHPRA believes that recording additional names (or aliases) on the register will help to inform and protect the public, by making it easier to identify a practitioner who may be registered and able to practise but who is not using their legal name.

There are some operational and practical issues that will need to be considered if governments make this change. A clear definition of an 'alias' is required, so practitioners' reporting obligations to AHPRA and the Board are clear. AHPRA and National Boards will need to consider what information practitioners will need to provide about their use of aliases in practice and whether any verification of this will be necessary to protect the validity of the register. Finally, there may be risks of unintended consequences - including whether publishing aliases could be used for commercial gain or benefits that are not related to public information and protection, which is the focus of the National Law.

AHPRA and the Board will keep practitioners and the public informed of any changes to the law and reporting requirements.

Paramedics: Welcome to the National Scheme!

On Saturday 1 December 2018 the National Scheme reached a milestone with paramedicine becoming the sixteenth regulated health profession.

Reflecting on the milestone, Paramedicine Board of Australia Chair Associate Professor Stephen Gough ASM Gough noted that it was the culmination of many years of debate, deliberation and sustained effort by the paramedic profession to join a national regulatory scheme that has patient safety at its heart.

'While paramedics have always had the patient at the centre of everything they do – showing compassion, understanding and empathy to those they provide care – the past two decades have also seen the profession grow in complexity; paramedics are now working in a range of roles and environments, using sophisticated treatments and technology, to provide world-class services to Australian communities.

'Regulating paramedicine under the National Scheme acknowledges the critical role paramedics play in our health system and recognises paramedics as registered health professionals,' Associate Professor Gough said.

1 December 2018 also marks just over two years since the [COAG Health Council](#) announced its intention to regulate the paramedicine profession, with the inaugural National Board appointed in October 2017.

Over this time, stakeholders across the profession, including governments, jurisdictional ambulance services, and private and volunteer organisations, have worked together to make sure that all eligible paramedics are well prepared for regulation.

Since registration opened at the beginning of September 2018, over 17,000 paramedics have applied for registration.

Find out more about paramedicine on the [Paramedicine Board of Australia's 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.

Kim Gibson

Chair

18 December 2018