



## Communiqué

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The 36th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held on 22 November 2012 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) National Office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board at its meeting and other points of interest. The Board publishes this communiqué on its website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in the work of the Board.

### Consultations

The Board has released a revised version of its *Guidelines for use of scheduled medicines* for consultation. This paper is now published on the Board's website under the 'News' tab.

The Board invites interested parties to provide feedback by COB Monday 4 February 2013.

### Registration renewal

Optometrists who have yet to renew their registration, which is due 30 November, are encouraged to renew online and on time.

To ensure that everyone who wants to renew their registration does so, hard copy letters have been sent to optometrists who have already received email reminders but are yet to renew online.

In the National Scheme, health practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time. The job of the Board – with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) – is to make this as simple and straightforward as possible.

Shortly after AHPRA receives an optometrist's application for renewal of registration, it will stop sending renewal reminders. A new online facility to 'opt out' of renewing registration also puts a stop to renewal reminders if you are planning to not renew your registration. Optometrists who do not want to renew their registration can simply ignore the reminders or go online to 'opt out' of renewing.

Applications received after the registration expiry date will incur a late payment fee, which will be payable in addition to the annual renewal fee.

There are significant consequences for individuals who do not renew on time in the National Scheme.

Under the National Law, optometrists who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the National Register of Practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise their profession in Australia until a new application is approved. Neither the Board nor AHPRA have any discretion about this.

Optometrists can check that their application has been received via the online receipt service at [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency - Renewal Received Confirmation](#). Individuals whose application to renew registration has been received can practise while their application is being processed.

The listing on the National Register of Practitioners is evidence for employers that a health professional is registered, even if their registration expiry date has passed. Alternatively, optometrists can print a copy of their registration certificate using AHPRA's online services at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

Optometrists who do not renew their registration by 30 November 2012, or within the following one month late period, can apply to AHPRA for a fast-track application for registration. These practitioners should note that they are not able to practise their profession until their fast-track registration application has been processed and approved.

## **Audit**

In conjunction with the current registration renewal process, optometrists are being randomly selected for audit for compliance with their board's registration standards: criminal history, professional indemnity insurance, recency of practice and continuing professional development. Optometrists selected for audit will need to provide evidence to support the declarations made in relation to these registration standards when they renew their registration.

AHPRA will notify individuals randomly selected for the audit and provide them with clear instructions about what they will need to do next and what evidence they will need to provide.

Practitioners selected for audit should review this information, including the Optometry specific FAQs published at the 'Audit' section under the 'Registration' tab on the AHPRA website.

## **Graduate applications**

Graduates from the approved programs of study conducted by the University of New South Wales and the University of Melbourne can now apply for general registration and for endorsement for scheduled medicines.

To ensure that the application for general registration and endorsement for scheduled medicines are considered at the same time, graduates should complete and send an [Application for endorsement of registration for scheduled medicines – AESM-05](#) form.

This applies to both online and paper applications.

No fee for application for endorsement will apply for applications made at the same time as an application for general registration.

Further information on graduate applications is available at [www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx).

## **2012 Annual Report**

AHPRA and the National Boards have released their 2012 Annual Report. The 2012 Annual Report details the work of the National Boards and AHPRA in implementing the second year of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The release was supported by the publication of a special edition of the AHPRA Report. The 2012 Annual Report and the AHPRA report are both available online at: [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). The 2012 Annual Report is published under 'Legislation and Publications' and the AHPRA report is under 'News'.

## **Conclusion**

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

For more detail or with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

## **Colin Waldron**

Chair

27 November 2012