



Communiqué

The fourteenth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 25 November 2010 at the National AHPRA offices in Melbourne.

Western Australia

The Board would like to remind all optometrists who were registered only in Western Australia prior to 18 October 2010 who hold qualifications for therapeutic endorsement of registration that to be endorsed under the National Law, they must apply to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) for endorsement. Application forms are available on the Board's [website](#). To be eligible for endorsement of registration applicants must meet requirements of the [recency of practice registration standard](#).

Endorsement for scheduled medicines expiry

Prior to the introduction of the national scheme, some jurisdictions had an expiry date for scheduled medicines endorsement. There is no such expiry date for endorsement for scheduled medicines under the national scheme. However, optometrists should inform themselves of the requirements of the [continuing professional development registration standard](#) for those holding an endorsement for scheduled medicines.

Endorsement for scheduled medicines on the public register

The Board is aware of the difficulty in checking if an optometrist holds endorsement for scheduled medicines on the public register. The Board is working with AHPRA to try and improve this.

In the interim, to check the endorsement status of an optometrist go to the [search function](#) for the public register on the AHPRA website.

Enter the required information to commence the search.

When the search results appear, click on the link at the word 'view' at the end of the result line under the detail section.

Click on this and a second screen will open.

Scroll down to the endorsement section. If an optometrist holds a current endorsement, then the words 'scheduled medicines – optometry' will be listed under the endorsement heading.

The Board is aware that prior to the national scheme, in some jurisdictions it was possible to search lists of endorsed optometrists in a particular area without knowing the name of the practitioner. At this stage this search capacity is not possible within AHPRA. The Board will work with AHPRA to try and reinstate this valuable search function.

Consultation on therapeutic qualifications as a requirement for general registration

In the communiqué from its twelfth meeting the Board outlined work currently underway on assessing future options in relation to the qualifications required for entry to practice, including whether all optometrists providing optometric services to patients in the clinical setting will be expected to provide a broad range of clinical services, including therapeutic prescribing. The Board will publish the document on its [website](#) for public consultation on 17



January 2011 for an extensive period of time to provide all interested parties with the opportunity to respond.

Registration Renewal

It is important that all registered optometrists are aware of the importance of renewing your registration on time under the national scheme. AHPRA will manage the renewal process on behalf of the Board. You will be provided with at least two months notice before your registration is due. Those registrants who do not renew their registration before one month after the due date will see their registration lapse and their name removed from the register.

The Board would like to remind all optometrists that the primary responsibility for renewing lies with the individual. To ensure that there are no difficulties in receiving the renewal notice, optometrists should notify AHPRA of any changes to their contact details as soon as practical. A change of address form is available on the [AHPRA website](#).

The Board has been informed by AHRA that there is a delay in the issuing of the receipts for payments made online for those who have renewed in recent weeks. Optometrists who have renewed their registration online are advised to check that their payment has been debited correctly from your bank account and that your name appears on the [public register](#). If you have any concern regarding this, please contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or via the [online enquiry form](#).

Return to Practice and Supervision Guidelines

As stated in its previous communiqué, the Board is aware of the impacts of the recency of practice registration standard on all registrants particularly those who have had a break from practice for some time. The Board is working on a guideline to inform registrants who wish to return to practice after an absence of more than 3 years. This document will include possible requirements of mentoring, supervision, and CPD requirements.

The Board is also developing supervision guidelines for optometrists supervising their colleagues as they return to practice.

Registration fees

The Board has released a statement to explain the variation in renewal fees across the different states and territories during the transition to one renewal date of 30 November. The statement is available from the [News & Updates](#) section of the Board's website.



Non-Practicing Registration

The Board has prepared a statement to be published on its website to guide optometrists in regard to non-practising registration.

This type of registration may be suitable for optometrists who:

- have retired completely from practice,
- are not practising temporarily (for example, on maternity or paternity leave) or
- who are not practising in Australia but are practising overseas.

The Board's definition of 'practice' is:

Any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. For the purposes of this registration standard, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

This definition is contained in the Board's professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard and recency of practice registration standard.

Optometrists with non-practising registration cannot undertake any practice as defined above whether they are being remunerated or not.

There is a reduced fee for non-practising registration.

The Board's professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard and continuing professional development registration standard do not apply to optometrists holding non-practising registration. However, the Board advises all optometrists considering moving to non-practising registration to consider their circumstances and the requirements for applying for general registration again in the future.

The requirements are outlined in the form 'application for general registration as an optometrist (for current non-practising registrants)' available from the forms section of the Board's website.

Conclusion

The Board is working closely with AHPRA and other National Boards to ensure that the needs of optometrists are met in the implementation of the National Registration Scheme. The Board is committed to reviewing and developing standards, codes and guidelines across a range of issues relating to the registration and practice of optometrists in Australia.

Individual Optometrists are encouraged to keep themselves informed of their obligations as registrants under the National Scheme and information pertinent to them by checking the Board's website at regular intervals and by encouraging their colleagues to do the same.