

Communiqué

The 64th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 26 June 2015 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting as well as other points of interest. We publish it on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Use of the term specialities in title descriptors for optometrists

Under the National Law¹, there is no specialist registration for optometry and the title 'specialist' is restricted. It is therefore unlawful for optometrists to call themselves specialists or imply that they are specialists in their advertising. The specialist titles recognised under the National Law only relate to medical, dental or podiatric specialists.

All registered optometrists can use the title 'optometrist' in their advertising. It is also acceptable to list credentials and recognised qualifications in advertising.

It is not acceptable to claim specialisation or use words such as 'specialist', 'specialty' or 'specialise' (or any other words deriving from 'special') as it may give the impression that an optometrist is a specialist in a particular area, which is contrary to the advertising provisions of the National Law. However, an optometrist could reasonably say they have an 'interest', 'experience' or 'predominantly practise' in an area of practice.

Budget and health profession agreement

Under the National Law, the National Boards and AHPRA work in partnership to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), each with specific roles and responsibilities. The guiding principles of the National Law require the National Scheme to operate in a 'transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way'.

Every year each of the National Boards and AHPRA publish a health profession agreement that details the fees payable by health practitioners, the annual budget of the National Board and the services provided by AHPRA that enable the National Boards to carry out their functions under the National Law.

In order to inform its review of the health profession agreement the Board reviewed and signed off on its 2015/16 budget and work plan. These documents will be published on the Board's website soon. The Board was then able to review and agree to the health profession agreement for the 2015/16 financial year. The 2015/16 health profession agreement will be published on the [AHPRA website](#) under *Publications* in the near future.

Call for optometrist to join CPD assessment panel

On behalf of the Board, Optometry Australia (OA) manages the continuing professional development (CPD) accreditation function for the optometry profession. As part of the *Eye on CPD* program, OA is seeking expressions of interest from members of the profession to form an independent CPD Assessment Panel. Its role will be to provide professional expertise in the assessment of identified accreditation applications, assess complaints from delegates and provide feedback regarding CPD activities requiring review or audit. OA is looking for a representative from any state or territory in Australia who is not a

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

member of the professional association. Optometric educators and clinical/academic leaders in particular are invited to apply. Please address your interest or enquiries to cpd@optometry.org.au.

Revised English language skills and criminal history registration standards in effect soon

AHPRA and the Board have published the contents of two revised registration standards – the English language skills registration standard and the criminal history registration standard – and supporting materials to help practitioners understand the new requirements before they come into effect.

Both these standards were developed after a review of the current standards and public consultation. They are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. The Board's website has been updated with the revised [registration standards](#). Both standards come into effect from 1 July 2015.

Further information

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of you as an optometrist on our website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or questions about your registration or renewal please send an online enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

2 July 2015