



Communiqué

The twenty first meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 July 2011 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) national offices in Melbourne. This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board.

Release of consultation document for therapeutic qualifications for general registration

The Optometry Board of Australia has released its consultation paper outlining the Board's proposed changes to requirements for therapeutic qualifications for general registration.

Practitioners and community members are encouraged to provide feedback on the consultation paper which is published on the Board's website (www.optometryboard.gov.au).

This is the second phase of a consultation that began in February 2011, and is open to written feedback by organisations or individuals until close of business on **Monday 3 October 2011**.

The document outlines the Board's regulatory response, with two registration standards for consultation and comments:

1. registration standard on general registration – to come into effect 1 December 2014, and
2. registration standard on limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice (under section 66 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory) (appendix B).

In developing the proposed regulatory response, the Board has considered the relevant decisions made by the previous state and territory optometry registration boards. The Board is also committed to providing all parties with fair and reasonable notice of any proposed changes to allow sufficient time for effective implementation. The changes would at this time only apply to initial applications for general registration and not renewal of general registration.

After considering the submissions received, the Board will forward the proposed changes to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval.

All optometrists are encouraged to consider the proposals and take the opportunity to provide feedback to the Board.

Registration renewal

Optometrists whose principal place of practice is WA or ACT should now have renewed their registration for the first time under the National Scheme. You can check the progress of your registration renewal at www.ahpra.gov.au. On receipt of your renewal application, AHPRA will assess the declarations that you have made in this application. There may need to be additional assessment and consideration of your application. This may involve referral to the Board's registration and notification committee.



It is important to remember that during this time of assessment, under the National Law, you are able to practise while your renewal application is being processed. You also remain registered for one month after your registration expiry date listed on the Register. If your name appears on the Register, you are registered and can practise (excepting optometrists with a Registration Type of 'non-practising' or those with a condition which stops them from practising or where their registration is suspended).

If you intended to renew your registration, but did not do so by 31 July, your registration is now lapsed. Your name will have been removed from the register and you must cease practice until you are restored to the register. If you wish to re-register, you can apply for Fast Track registration up to one month after your registration has lapsed. If you have any queries about this please contact AHPRA immediately on 1300 419 495.

All optometrists in Australia are now due to renew their registration by 30 November each year, including those who just renewed in WA and ACT.

Contact details

The Board would like to remind all optometrists of the requirement under the National Law to notify the Board within 30 days of any change in address, principal place of practice or name. You can do this online by logging onto online services.

If you have your AHPRA user ID and pass code go online at www.ahpra.gov.au and click online services located in the top right hand corner, then follow the prompts to update your contact details.

If you do not yet have your user ID, complete an online enquiry form (www.ahpra.gov.au/about-ahpra/contact-us/make-an-enquiry) and select 'User ID' as the enquiry type. These will be then sent to you and you can then access the online services.

CPD

Thank you to everyone who has contacted the Board to clarify issues regarding the CPD registration standard and guidelines. We have also had the chance to speak with some of you directly at recent conferences.

The Board is aware of a range of common issues faced by optometrists in the implementation of the new CPD requirements. The Board is looking at ways to address these issues and will be publishing the outcomes in coming months in communiqués, an e-newsletter and on its website.

In the interim, the Board has published two templates that you may choose to use to assist you in meeting the record keeping requirements of the [CPD registration standard](#).

All optometrists should familiarise themselves with and adhere to these requirements. Evidence of meeting these requirements will form the basis of upcoming audit of compliance with the registration standards.



Board nominee to OCANZ

The Board recently undertook an expression of interest process for the Board's nominee for membership of the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand. Mr Mitchell Anjou has accepted the position of the Board's nominee and Mr Daryl Guest has accepted the Board's nominee to the Board of Directors of OCANZ.

Optometry Board of Australia website

The Board continues to publish important information on its website, and in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the nine other boards in the National Scheme, have updated their website to make it easier to navigate and find important information.

The Board's website features clearer menus and intuitive architecture, better access to online services and more information tailored to the optometry profession. Information about the National Scheme and links to AHPRA are also accessible.

Conclusion

On 1 July AHPRA and the Board celebrated the first year of operation of the National Scheme.

At this time the Board would like to acknowledge some of the challenges faced by the profession as a whole in adapting to the new requirements of the scheme and the difficulties some individuals faced in the initial renewal of their registration. The Board is committed to working with the profession and AHPRA to increase understanding of the Board's intent in setting the requirements for registration as an optometrist. The Board and AHPRA are working toward ongoing improvements in registration and notification processes.

A lot of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners is published on the Board website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or 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
11 August 2011