

Statement

17 February 2011

Title protections

Issues related to the protection of the use of the title of optician by optometrists and de-regulation of the optical dispensing industry are long-standing issues for the optometry profession, optical dispensers and government.

The role of the Optometry Board of Australia is to protect the public by regulating the optometry profession in the national registration and accreditation scheme. The work of the Board is governed by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act (the National Law) as in place in all state and territories.

The Board has recently advised the President of the Australian Dispensing Opticians Association of its concern that members of the Australian Dispensing Opticians Association may be inadvertently breaching provisions of the National Law in relation to the use of the protected title 'optician'. The Board asked the Association to consider the impact of this law both in relation to its own obligations and those of its members.

This advice was provided after the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) brought to the Board's attention that a practitioner was using the protected title in breach of the National Law. In administering the National Law the Board must respond to such breaches.

The National Law contains detailed provisions about the use of the title of optician. Any changes to these provisions through changes to the National Law, or the de-regulation of the dispensing optician industry, are issues for the profession, industry and government to consider.

The Board continues to focus on protecting the public and will continue to act on any breaches of the National Law that come before it.