



SECOND MEETING OF THE OPTOMETRY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA 21 OCTOBER 2009

The second meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia was held on 21 October 2009 at the Hilton Melbourne Airport. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

The main focus of the Board's second meeting was further discussion of the proposals that would be the subject of the consultation process to occur in late October and November around registration and related matters. Following the consultation period, the Board will finalise its position on registration proposals. At its December meeting the Board will complete this work in order to provide the proposals to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for decision.

The Board acknowledges the tight timetable for completion of the initial part of its work. The timetable is necessary so that all registrants can have advice ahead of the commencement day on 1 July 2010 of the new registration standards and requirements.

The Board agreed that it would undertake consultation in late October on proposals on the following matters:

- the five mandatory registration standards, namely standards on requirements for professional indemnity insurance, matters about the criminal history of applicants for registration, requirements for continuing professional development, requirements for English language skills and requirements in relation to previous practice, and
- arrangements for scheduled medicines endorsement for prescribing of ocular therapeutic medicines.

The Board finalised arrangements for publication of a consultation paper dealing with these proposals on its website, and agreed on a process to notify key stakeholders. The consultation paper was posted on the Agency website (www.aphra.gov.au) on 27 October 2009. Comments on the consultation paper are due by 24 November 2009 and the Board urges stakeholders to meet this deadline so their comments can be properly considered.

The Board further considered proposals for how individual registrants will transition from their current registration to the new registration types set out in the proposed National Law. The Board settled those matters which did not require Ministerial Council consideration. The Board noted that for the majority of registrants there was a clear type of registration to which they will transfer on 1 July 2010. Registrants will be advised by the Board of the type to which they will transfer well ahead of the commencement date.

The Board considered issues associated with the supply of optical appliances, particularly the supply of cosmetic contact lenses without prescription. The Board determined to prepare a submission for consideration by State and Territory Health Ministers and the Ministerial Council, identifying the risks associated with the unregulated supply of cosmetic contact lenses and setting out the case for further regulation of this activity.

The Board considered a number of administrative and financial matters, including its budget in 2010–2011 and possible fee structures. The Board will give further consideration to these matters at its November meeting.

The Board acknowledged the further work done in preparation for implementation of the national scheme by the existing State and Territory boards, its accrediting authority, AHPRA and the National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project team and looked forward to continuing to work with these groups over the coming months.

Colin Waldron
Chair, Optometry Board of Australia
30 October 2009