

Communiqué

The 69th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 26 November 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.

Revised recency of practice registration standard published

The Board have published the revised recency of practice registration standard that came into effect on 1 December to replace the previous standard that was in place. Further information including FAQs is available [here](#).

National drug screening protocol

From November 2015 registered health practitioners who have restrictions placed on their registration by a National Board as a result of past substance misuse will be subject to routine quarterly hair testing, in addition to random urine testing.

The introduction of routine hair testing is based on expert advice about modern screening methods. Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug taking history).

The drug screening protocol is part of a wider, national strategy to effectively manage compliance and monitoring across the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. More information is in the [statement](#) published on the Board's website.

2014/15 National Scheme annual report

AHPRA and the National Boards have released their 2014/15 annual report on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), providing a comprehensive record of the operations of the National Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2015.

The annual report provides a national snapshot of the work and finances of the National Scheme and is tabled in the parliaments of each state and territory and the Commonwealth.

The annual report is published at www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2015. It includes a detailed report – including data – for the Optometry Board of Australia. A media release about the report with data across professions and jurisdictions is published on the [AHPRA website](#). A report, which presents the data specific to optometry practice, will be published on the Board's website before the end of the calendar year.

Quarterly registration data released

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's optometry registrants.

At September 2015, there were a total of 4983 registered optometrists comprising of the following number of registrants according to registration type:

- 4983 – general registration
- 2115 – general registration with endorsement for scheduled medicines
- 2 – limited registration
- 158 – non-practising registration

More details on the registration data can be located [here](#).

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.

Ian Bluntish

Chair
Optometry Board of Australia

22 December 2015