



## **Communiqué**

The thirteenth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 October 2010 at the National AHPRA offices in Melbourne.

### **Western Australia**

Western Australia joined the National Scheme on Monday 18 October 2010. All optometrists registered with the Optometrists Registration Board of Western Australia on this date are now registered by the Optometry Board of Australia.

The Western Australian office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has opened. The contact details for this office are available on the AHPRA website found below. AHPRA manages all registrations, notifications and financial matters on behalf of the Board.

Registrants should contact this office with any issues or concerns regarding the transition of their registration.

The Board would like to remind all optometrists who were registered only in Western Australia prior to 18 October who hold qualifications for therapeutic endorsement of registration that to be endorsed under the National Law they must apply to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) for endorsement. Applications are available on the Board's website. To be eligible for endorsement of registration applicants must meet requirements of the recency of practice registration standard published on the website at [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au).

### **Scheduled Medicines Endorsement for Registration**

In the communiqué from its twelfth meeting the Board outlined work currently being considered on assessing future options in relation to the qualifications required for entry to practice, including whether all optometrists providing optometric services to patients in the clinical setting will be expected to provide a broad range of clinical services, including therapeutic prescribing. The Board is currently undertaking an internal consultation process before releasing a paper for public comment in mid-January. All interested parties are encouraged to monitor the Board's website from this date and to make a submission to the Board on this issue.

### **Lapsed Registration**

It is important that all registered optometrists are aware of the importance of renewing your registration on time under the National Registration Scheme. AHPRA will manage the renewal process on behalf on the Board. You will be provided with at least two months notice before your registration is due. Those registrants who do not renew their registration within one month of the due date will see their registration lapse and their name removed from the register.

The Board would like to remind all optometrists that the primary responsibility for renewing their lies with the individual. To ensure that there are no unnecessary delays, optometrists should notify AHPRA of any changes to their contact details as soon as practical. A change of address form is available on the AHPRA website.



### Supervision Plan for Return to Practise

The Board is aware of the impacts of the Recency of Practice Registration Standard on all registrants particularly those who have had a break from practice for some time. The Board is working on a guideline to inform registrants who wish to return to practice after an absence of more than 3 years. This document will include possible requirements of mentoring, supervision, and CPD requirements.

### Consultation with Stakeholders

The Board is committed to reviewing and developing standards, codes and guidelines across a range of issues relating to the registration and practice of optometrists in Australia. The Board decided to hold formal consultation with key stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss possible changes to professional standard, guidelines, and policy. These will include educational providers, accrediting organisations, professional associations and any relevant interested parties.

### Strategic Plan

The Board held a very successful planning day after the Board meeting where it considered the key priorities and directions for 2010-2013. A strategic plan, summarising these strategic priorities is in the final stages of development. This will be published once finalised.

### Health Workforce Australia

Health Workforce Australia (HWA) has been established to produce more effective, streamlined and integrated clinical training arrangements and to support workforce reform initiatives. The Optometry Board of Australia, with all other National Boards, has held talks with HWA with a view to developing a co-operative relationship concerning common issues. This will be an important relationship for the Board as all decisions and deliberations must give full consideration to positive or negative impacts of its decisions on the optometry workforce.

### Conclusion

The Board is working closely with AHPRA and other National Boards to ensure that the needs of optometrists are met in the implementation of the National Registration Scheme.

Individual Optometrists are encouraged to keep themselves informed of their obligations as registrants under the National Scheme and information pertinent to them by checking the Board's website at regular intervals and by encouraging their colleagues to do the same.