

Communiqué

The 44th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held over two dates on 23 August 2013 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) Tasmanian office in Hobart and on 30 August at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in Melbourne.

The meeting held in Hobart was to celebrate the Centenary of optometry regulation which occurred in Tasmania in 1913 and was the first official government regulation of optometry in the world. The meeting then continued in Melbourne, coinciding with the National Scheme's annual conference which focused this year on knowledge sharing across professions and identifying common opportunities and challenges in regulating health practitioners.

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 on to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Optometry Regulatory Reference Group

The Optometry Regulatory Reference Group (the Reference Group) is convened by the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) to:

- provide a forum for discussion of matters relating to the registration of optometrists and to the accreditation of optometry programs under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the national scheme), and
- to foster communication and understanding of the different regulatory and accreditation issues between New Zealand and Australia.

The Reference Group Terms of Reference are published on the Board's website at www.optometryboard.gov.au/About/Optometry-Regulatory-Reference-Group.aspx.

The group met for the second time on 25 July 2013 and discussed a range of issues including entry-level competencies, clinical placements, guidelines for supervisors in private practice, future graduate numbers, therapeutics, etc. This provided a valuable opportunity to share information about the activities of the members and to discuss issues of common interest.

Review of registration standards, guidelines and codes

The first 10 National Boards to enter the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) developed standards, guidelines and codes for its commencement on 1 July 2010. These standards, guidelines and codes were scheduled for review at least every three years.

All National Boards have registration standards which define the requirements that applicants for registration and registrants need to meet to be registered. Each National Board has standards outlining the requirements for:

- Criminal history
- English language skills
- Recency of practice
- Professional indemnity insurance (PII), and
- Continuing professional development (CPD).

The Boards have reviewed the criminal history and English language skills registration standards and have agreed that these will be largely common across all professions.

Each National Board has also reviewed the registration standards for recency of practice, PII and CPD. The Boards are aligning these standards where possible across all professions but it is anticipated that there will be some differences, reflecting different approaches across professions. Optometry reviewed its CPD registration standard earlier this year so is focusing its attention on reviews of standards for recency of practice and PII.

The registration standards have been reformatted for consistent presentation and are written in simpler language. The Board has made changes when it received feedback that elements in the standards had not worked as intended.

The aim now is to coordinate consultation for the registration standards across all National Boards as far as possible.

Renewal

Registered optometrists are required to renew their registration by the end of November 2013. Email reminders to optometrists eligible to apply to renew online will be sent in late September. The email will contain a link to the renewal login page and a link to additional information about changes that may impact your registration. We encourage you to renew your registration online, on time.

More 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.

For more detail or questions about your registration or renewal please send an online enquiry form or contact AHRPA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

18 September 2013