



Communique

Sixth Meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia 25 March 2010

The sixth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia was held on 25 March 2010 in Melbourne. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

As in previous meetings, in its sixth meeting the Board focused on the matters it had to resolve before the commencement of the national registration and accreditation scheme on 1 July 2010.

Workplan

The Board expanded its workplan to include proposals to develop policies on the supply of optical appliances, diagnostic drugs in optometric practice and record keeping by optometrists. The Board is awaiting the outcome of Ministerial Council's consideration of proposed registration standards before continuing with further development of non-medical prescribing administration processes to support the standard on endorsement of registration. The Board is also developing its strategic plan.

Guidelines Consultation

The Board released guidelines for consultation in March and submissions close on 7 April 2010. The Board will consider feedback provided through the consultation process at its April meeting and use this to inform the final guidelines that will be published on its website.

Board Committees and Delegations

The Board further considered the operation of committees and finalised delegations to AHPRA. The Board has established the following committees and working groups:

- Registration and Notifications Committee
- Finance Committee
- CPD working group
- Guidelines working group
- Scheduled Medicines Advisory Group

Accreditation

The Board continued its work on developing an accreditation agreement with the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand. It allocated funding for the accreditation of optometry programs of study leading to qualification for registration, post-graduate ocular therapeutic programs and the assessment of overseas trained optometrists seeking registration.

Student registration

Under the National Law, the Board will be required to register students. The Board determined that students must be registered at the point that they are enrolled in an optometry specific course. Students will be required to register with the Board from March 2011. The Board will provide further detail on student registration later in 2010 to ensure student registration requirements and processes are in place for the 2011 academic year.

Transition information

The Board considered the 2010 - 2011 registration fees at its March meeting and will announce fees in April.

The Optometry Board of Australia will be writing to every registered optometrist in late April, to support the transition of all registrants into the national scheme. The letter will explain each practitioner's registration type from 1 July 2010. The letter will detail the information that will appear on the online national Register of Optometrists. The Board is urging all optometrists to make sure the contact details held by their current State or Territory Board are accurate and up to date before 30 June 2010.

The Board made a range of decisions about this transitioning process. In general, optometrists will transition to the type of registration that matches their current registration. While the name of some registration categories will change, the Board has no intention to change any optometrists' scope of practice. All registrants should check the registration type allocated to them in the April letter and provide feedback to AHPRA if there are any errors.

A committee of the Board will consider cases in which registrants believe there is an error in the proposed registration type allocated to them, so these issues can be finalised before 1 July 2010.

A transition plan for optometrists who do not hold qualifications for diagnostic drugs use was approved by the Board and will include the development of a guideline which will be communicated to registrants prior to commencement of the scheme and published on the Board's website.

The National Board is also requesting that State and Territory boards transfer excess funds to the National Board, as this is integral to setting registration fees for optometrists under the national scheme.

Current State and Territory Boards

The Board previously decided that it would not require state and territory boards. However, it recognises the skill and experience of current board members and is keen to retain this in the transition to the national scheme. The Board will write to current Board members seeking expressions of interest to serve on panels under the national registration scheme.

Proof of identity

From 1 July 2010, new applicants for registration will be required to meet the Board's proof of identity requirements which relies on a 100-point check, consistent with the Attorney General's standard. A list of Authorised Officers will be provided to enable to have their documents certified.

Colin Waldron
Chair
1 April 2010