

## Communiqué

### Seventh Meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia 29 April 2010

The seventh meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia was held on 29 April 2010 in Melbourne. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

As in previous meetings, in its seventh meeting the Board focused on the issues to support the smooth introduction of the national registration and accreditation scheme on 1 July 2010.

#### Registration standards

Ministerial Council approved the Board's registration standards, which will apply from 1 July 2010 with the commencement of the national registration and accreditation scheme:

- criminal history registration standard
- English language requirements registration standard
- professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard
- continuing professional development registration standard
- recency of practice registration standard
- endorsement for scheduled medicines registration standard.

Details of these standards and an explanation for practitioners about the implications of the national scheme are published on the Board's website at [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au).

Under the National Law, the Board will have the power to endorse the registration of eligible optometrists who are qualified to obtain, possess, administer, prescribe or supply schedule 2, 3 or 4 medicines used in the topical treatment of conditions of the eye, included in the list approved and published by the Board. Currently endorsed optometrists will transition to the new scheme with their endorsement. The scheduled medicines an optometrist is authorised to use and in what circumstances vary by State and Territory, subject to the local drugs and poisons laws that apply. These arrangements across jurisdictions are not currently consistent. The Board is considering this issue and how it can support the transition to national consistency throughout Australia.

#### Guidelines Consultation

The consultation period on the Board's codes and guidelines concluded on 7 April 2010. The Board considered feedback provided through the consultation process at its April meeting and will use this to finalise the following guidelines that will be published on its website in June 2010:

- Guidelines on advertising
- Guidelines on mandatory notification
- Code of conduct for optometrists
- Continuing professional development policy
- Guidelines on continuing professional development for endorsed and non-endorsed optometrists and
- CPD Accreditation Committee terms of reference

- Guidelines for use of scheduled medicines and Scheduled Medicines Advisory Committee terms of reference
- Guidelines on the prescription of ocular appliances
- Guidelines on professional indemnity insurance

### **Board Committees and Delegations**

The Board appointed members to committees and will extend invitations to external members of its advisory committees during May. The following committees will perform tasks delegated by the Board:

- Registration and Notifications Committee
- Finance Committee
- CPD Advisory Committee
- Guidelines Advisory Committee
- Scheduled Medicines Advisory Committee

### **Transition information**

By mid May, all registered optometrists will have been sent a letter from the Optometry Board of Australia about their transition to the national scheme. The letter explains each practitioner's registration type and details the information that will appear on the online national Register of Optometrists from 1 July 2010. All registrants should check the registration type allocated to them in the letter and provide feedback to AHPRA if there are any errors. 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.

### **Accreditation arrangements**

The Board continued to progress the agreement with its accrediting body, the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ). Courses accredited by OCANZ which are suitable for registration of optometrists and post-graduate courses in ocular therapeutics suitable for endorsement of registration of optometrists will be published on the Board's website on 1 July 2010.

### **Health profession agreement**

The Board and AHPRA are currently developing a health profession agreement which will outline the services provided to the Board by AHPRA, based on the fees payable by optometrists under the National law and the Board's annual budget. The Board will finalise its agreement with AHPRA and publish national fees in June 2010.

### **Application forms and certificates of registration**

The Board continued to review the application forms for registration to be available to new registrants and renewing registrants after the introduction of the national scheme. It has now finalised the detail that will appear on registration certificates. Certificates will be provided electronically at renewal of registration and in hardcopy on request. The online Register will be the primary tool used by the profession, the community and employers to confirm up-to-date registration information about a registered optometrist.

### **Conditions, undertakings and reprimands on the Register**

The National Law requires the Board to publish conditions imposed and undertakings accepted from optometrists on the Register of Optometrists. It also allows the Board to decide to not record a condition imposed or an undertaking accepted when the practitioner has an impairment. This applies if it is necessary to protect the practitioner's privacy and there is not an overriding public interest for the relevant condition or the details of the undertaking to be recorded. The Board has adopted a policy approach to this issue, consistent with the National Law. If an optometrist has health conditions recorded on their registration, the following wording will appear: "This practitioner's registration is subject to conditions that relate to

his/her personal health. These conditions are not publicly available due to privacy considerations.”

Colin Waldron  
Chair  
14 May 2010