



Communiqué

Ninth Meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia 24 June 2010

The ninth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia was held on 24 June 2010 in Melbourne. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

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

Transition to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

At the time of the Board's June meeting, all jurisdictions except for South Australia and Western Australia had passed legislation to join the national scheme. The Board continued to focus on a range of transitional issues at its final meeting prior to commencement of the national scheme noting that contingencies were in place by AHPRA in the event that one or more jurisdictions did not join the scheme by 1 July 2010.

The Board finalised its Registration Transition Plan which will be published on its website. This outlines how registration types in each State and Territory convert to the new registration types and endorsements under the national scheme.

Board Committees

The Board appointed jurisdictional (optometrist) members to its Registration or Notifications Committee and finalised terms of reference for the committee, which plans to meet shortly after commencement of the national scheme. Each pair of jurisdictional members will meet with the core committee members (three national Board members) to consider the registration matters and notifications arising in their jurisdiction in accordance with the National Law. Through its Registration or Notifications Committee, the Board will continue to consider open cases previously dealt with (but not finalised) by State and Territory Boards and new matters arising from 1 July 2010.

The Board finalised terms of reference for its Immediate Action Committee which will be formed to exercise the Board's powers to take immediate action in relation to registered optometrists and students under s156 of the National Law. The committee will comprise two optometrist members of the Board and one community member of the Board.

Once membership of all of the Board's committees are finalised, the Board will publish details on its website.

Guidelines

The Board published the following guidelines on its website in June 2010:

- Code of conduct for optometrists
- Continuing professional development policy

- Guidelines on continuing professional development for endorsed and non-endorsed optometrists
- 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.

The Board finalised and published its Guidelines on professional indemnity insurance for publication on its website by 1 July 2010. All Boards also considered the following common guidelines for publication on websites:

- Guidelines on advertising
- Guidelines on mandatory notification.

Health profession agreement

The Board finalised its health profession agreement that details how AHPRA will support the Board and enable it to fulfill its primary role to protect the public which includes details of fees set by the Board including fees for registrants in New South Wales where a co-regulatory model exists. The fees set by the Board will be published on the Board's website by 1 July 2010.

Accreditation arrangements

AHPRA and the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) have now commenced finalising an agreement for OCANZ to accredit programs of study for approval by the Board. Approved courses suitable for registration will be published on the Board's website.

Meeting with the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board of New Zealand

Delegates of the Board, including the Chair met with delegates of the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board of New Zealand in Wellington, New Zealand. The meeting was considered successful by both parties and will continue annually in order to discuss issues of mutual relevance and interest to both jurisdictions bound by mutual recognition processes. One area of major focus during the meeting was the Board's implementation of its Guidelines from 1 July 2010 and standards of practice in both jurisdictions.

Approaching 1 July 2010 and commencement of the National Scheme

The Board congratulates the AHPRA staff and National Registration and Implementation Project team for the wonderful effort in achieving readiness for implementation of the national scheme by 1 July 2010.

With the finalisation of many important documents, guidelines and policies, the Board's website will undergo significant change to coincide with the commencement of the national scheme. Registrants are encouraged to visit the Board's website from 1 July 2010 at www.optometryboard.gov.au.

Colin Waldron
Chair
5 Jul 2010