



Communiqué

The twelfth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia was held on 23 September 2010 in Melbourne.

Update on Western Australia

Western Australia is expected to join the National Registration Scheme on 18 October 2010. The Board is finalising its Registration Transition Plan for registrants in Western Australia. This outlines how existing registration types in Western Australia will transition to the registration types established under the national scheme. AHPRA is also working towards de-duplicating records for registrants currently holding registration under the national scheme as well as in Western Australia. This aims to ensure that only one registration record remains on the national register of optometrists from participation day.

Optometrists registered only in Western Australia who hold qualifications for therapeutic endorsement of registration are reminded 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.

Scheduled Medicines Endorsement for Registration

From 2013, all graduates of Australian schools of optometry will hold qualifications suitable for endorsement of registration. The Board considered how this will impact on the future provision of optometric services to the public and consequently, the impact on the profession. The Board is currently 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 agreed that this is an important issue warranting wide ranging consultation. The Board's Policies, Standards and Guidelines Committee is now preparing a paper for consultation which may include options for possible registration standards. The Board hopes to receive submissions from stakeholders and the public on this important issue which has the capacity to affect the quality of optometric services delivered to the Australian public in the future. The Board aims to publish a consultation paper in December 2010.

AHPRA Policies on Freedom of Information, Complaints Handling, and Privacy

The Board has adopted the policies consistent with its primary goal of protecting the public. These policies are available on the AHPRA website.

Registration and Transition Issues

There have been very few problems for optometrists with the transition to the national scheme or with new registrations. The Board's Registration and Notifications Committee is working effectively and currently considering applications for therapeutic endorsement and recency of practice. The Board encourages registrants with queries about registration to contact AHPRA for advice on 1300 419 495.

Meeting with Stakeholders

The Board has been meeting with stakeholders to learn about their experience of the transition to national registration and to receive feedback on the recently adopted Standards, Guidelines and Policies. In this way, the Board aims to constantly review all matters concerning the quality administration of the key Board responsibilities. This includes maintaining the highest professional standards for registration, accreditation of education, and complaints in the best interests of the Australian people.

Communications

In addition to publishing its monthly communiqué, the Board considered other communications options and agreed to publish a newsletter for optometrists in the near future.

Colin Waldron
Chair
6 October 2010