



Communiqué

9 March 2011

The sixteenth meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 24 February 2011 at the National AHPRA offices in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board.

Renewal processes

Optometrists in all state and territories except Western Australia and the ACT have completed the first registration renewal cycle under the national registration and accreditation scheme. The Board has been working with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to resolve issues faced by a small number of optometrists in the renewal of their registration. AHPRA provides the administrative support for the Board under the national scheme.

Any optometrist who is not sure of their current registration status should check the public register (www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners) and contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495 with any follow up questions.

AHPRA's current top priority is improving services to practitioners so the basic processes of regulation – renewing and applying for registration – are as efficient, smooth and timely as they can be.

AHPRA intends to use a variety of methods to contact optometrists when their registration is next due for renewal. This date is 30 June 2011 for WA and ACT optometrists (when they will pay for five months registration) and then 30 November 2011 for optometrists in all states and territories. Optometrists in WA and ACT will be due to renew again in November.

To ensure that your ability to work is not interrupted and to help make sure future renewal processes go smoothly, please make sure that your contact details are up to date on the National Register. You can check your listing through the health practitioner login on the [AHPRA website](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). The Board encourages optometrists to provide their email address so AHPRA can email renewal reminders easily and the National Board can communicate with you about important issues for your registration.

If you have your AHPRA user ID and pass code, go online at www.ahpra.gov.au and click online services, then follow the prompts to update your contact details.

If you do not yet have your user ID or have lost it, complete an online enquiry form (www.ahpra.gov.au/about-ahpra/contact-us/make-an-enquiry) and select 'User ID' as the enquiry type.

You should also check your details on the public register or through online services to make sure AHPRA's renewal reminder letters find you.

Consultation on therapeutic qualifications as a requirement for general registration

The consultation process on the proposal for therapeutic qualification for general registration is now closed. The Board thanks everyone who submitted their comments and thoughts. The Board will now review the submissions and publish a report summarising this consultation stage and release the outcomes for further consultation.

As noted on the consultation document, unless otherwise indicated, all submissions will be published on the Board's website with the report.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Board has developed a CPD specific section of its website. This section lists all the Board's standards and guidelines and other information relating to CPD in one place.

Optometrists are encouraged to regularly review the information to better understand their obligations in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

Protected titles for Optometry under the National Law

The Board has referred in previous Communiqués to the matter of protected titles for optometry under the National Law. The Board wishes to draw attention to the provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation Law (National Law) as in force in each State and Territory in relation to protected titles. The Board believes that the use of the term 'Dispensing Optician' contravenes the restrictions on use of the protected title 'optician'. The Board has developed a [statement](#) on this matter and published it on its website.

Public Register

AHPRA has made some changes to improve the appearance of the [National Register](#) and to make information clearer and more accessible. These changes include the publication of the principal place of practice (suburb and postcode) on the search results page and easier identification of endorsements.

Student Registration

From March 2011, all students enrolled in an approved program of study who are not currently registered, will be registered in the national scheme.

If you are enrolled in an approved program of study in 2011 you do not need to apply for registration. AHPRA will work directly with the education providers to register all students who need to be registered. There are no fees for student registration. More information is available at www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Student-Registrations.

Conclusion

The Board is committed to providing more guidance and information to optometrists to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. It will continue to work closely with AHPRA to ensure the responsiveness and quality of the delivery of this scheme.

Colin Waldron

Chair

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