

## Media release

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11 November 2011

### Optometrists urged to renew registration online and on time

The Optometry Board of Australia today urged optometrists whose registration expires on 30 November to renew online and on time.

Board Chair Colin Waldron said the board was encouraged by the renewal response already received from the 4440 optometrists due to renew by 30 November 2011. With just over two weeks to go before the 30 November registration expiry date, more than 50 percent of optometrists due to renew have done so.

“It is fantastic that many optometrists due to renew have heeded calls to apply early and I would encourage all in the profession to use the online service for quick and easy renewal,” Mr Waldron said.

Optometrists who renewed their registration by 30 June 2011 were given valid registration for five months and must renew again by 30 November. The registration renewal cycle for all optometrists in Australia is now aligned and annual registration renewal will be due by 30 November.

Mr Waldron urged optometrists to check their contact details and update them if necessary to receive regular reminders from the board and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

“In the National Scheme, individual practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time. The job of the Optometry Board of Australia – with AHPRA – is to make this as simple and straightforward as possible,” he said.

Mr Waldron encouraged optometrists to provide AHPRA with their email address to allow for easy and efficient direct communication about renewal.

“Optometrists should watch for the reminders to renew registration as confirmation that they can renew online using their unique User ID which is included in all AHPRA correspondence,” he said.

“I urge anyone due to renew by 30 November who has not yet done so to act quickly as applications received after the registration expiry date will incur a late payment fee.”

The late payment fee will apply to practitioners who apply to renew during the one month late period outlined in the National Law. It will be payable in addition to the annual renewal fee.

Mr Waldron reminded the profession that there were significant consequences for individual optometrists who do not renew on time in the National Scheme.

Under the National Law, optometrists who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the National Register of Optometrists. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise in Australia until a new application is approved.

“Neither the board nor AHPRA have any discretion about this so our advice is clear – renew on time. The quickest and easiest way to do this is online,” Mr Waldron said.

There are some simple steps optometrists can follow for straightforward and easy renewal of registration:

1. **Check your contact details** – make sure your contact details, including email and mobile telephone, are correct and current. This will allow AHPRA to send you renewal reminders and to contact you easily. Set email accounts to receive information from the board and AHPRA.
2. **Check your registration expiry date** – practitioners can view their expiry date on the National Register of Optometrists, accessible at [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) and enter their last name and profession to search.
3. **Watch for the reminder to renew registration** – reminders to renew registration will be sent to individual practitioners at regular intervals before registration expires. Practitioners should look out for these reminders as confirmation that they can renew online. Practitioners can also mail their renewal application to AHPRA, GPO Box 9958, in their capital city. Practitioners whose intention is to not renew registration should tick the box on the registration renewal form acknowledging this and return the form to AHPRA. Renewal reminders will stop being sent to you after your request has been processed.

Optometrists can check that their application has been received via the online receipt service at [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency - Renewal Received Confirmation](#). Practitioners whose application to renew registration has been received can practise while their application is being processed.

The listing on the National Register of Optometrists is evidence for employers that a practitioner is registered, even if their registration expiry date has passed. Alternatively, practitioners can print off a copy of their registration certificate using AHPRA’s online services at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

#### **Failure to renew:**

Optometrists who forget to renew their registration by 30 November 2011, or within the following one month late period ending 31 December 2011, can apply to AHPRA for a fast-track application for registration. These practitioners should note that they are not able to practise in their profession until their fast-track registration application has been processed and approved.

#### *For more information*

- Visit [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) to view a *Registration Renewal FAQ*
- Visit [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200