



Communiqué

The 32nd meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held on 26 July 2012 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) Northern Territory Office in Darwin.

Prior to the meeting, the Board held an informal catch up with some Northern Territory-based optometrists. This was a wonderful opportunity to hear from our colleagues about the challenges and pleasures in working in the Northern Territory.

This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board at its meeting and other points of interest. The Board publishes this communiqué on its website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in the work of the Board.

Applications for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice

The Board has published an application form for this registration category under *Forms* on the *Registration* section of the Board's website.

Applicants should read the registration standard and fact sheet published under the *Registration Standard* section of the Board's website prior to completing the application.

Overseas trained optometrists *are still required* to qualify for and pass both the written and clinical OCANZ examinations and meet the Board's registration standards before they are eligible for general registration with the Board.

Changes to the Board's registration and notification committee

This month saw the first meeting of the Board's restructured registration and notification committee.

The committee membership has changed from two practitioner members from each jurisdiction and national board members. This structure allowed for input on matters that were 'open' investigations when the National Scheme started in 2010. Each of the jurisdiction members would only take part in the meeting if there was a matter from their state or territory.

The new membership is made up of three national board and four additional practitioner members. These seven members will consider all matters regardless of the state or territory. This will allow for consistency in decision making regardless of state or territory – a real benefit of the National Scheme.

On behalf of the Board I would like to publically thank those members who were on the first committee but are not continuing. Your efforts in assisting the Board in the transition to the National Scheme are appreciated.

For more information on the committee, and other Board committees, refer to the *About* section of the Board's website.

Audit pilot

The first phase of an audit pilot of pharmacy practitioners was recently completed. The audit pilot, conducted with a group of randomly selected pharmacy practitioners, was designed to determine the frequency, size and types of audits required and establish a robust audit methodology that can eventually be applied across all the professions in the National Scheme.

The report on the outcomes of the first phase is in the final stages of production and will soon be made available on the AHPRA website. The second phase, which will involve similar pilots across the pharmacy, optometry and chiropractic professions, will begin in October 2012 and run for approximately three months. Practitioners will be randomly selected across these three professions when they apply to renew their registration for the 2012-13 period. This will apply to both paper and online renewal applications. They will be audited for compliance against their board's registration standards: criminal history check, professional indemnity insurance, recency of practice and continuing professional development.

Using the lessons learned from the first phase of the pilot, further work in conjunction with the relevant National Boards will be undertaken to refine the audit framework in preparation for a profession wide application. Further information will be made available on each of the participating board's websites in the lead up to the commencement of the second phase.

Updates from the Board

The Board will be releasing its next e-newsletter towards the end of August. To ensure that future editions of the newsletter reach you, please check your contact details and update them if necessary. Email accounts should be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

To update your contact details, go to www.ahpra.gov.au, click online services, use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have your User ID, complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry or by calling 1300 419 495.

Conclusion

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.optometryboard.gov.au.

For more detail or with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair

1 August 2012