

Communiqué

The 53rd meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 27 June 2014 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting as well as other points of interest. We publish it on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Panel member recruitment

The Board convenes health panels and performance and professional standards panels when required to hold hearings into specific health, performance or conduct matters for individual registered health professionals and chooses panel members from a list of approved persons.

The Board extended the appointment of four optometry practitioners from Victoria on a list of approved persons for appointment to panels. Letters will be sent to successful applicants this month. The Board also approved the appointment of four medical practitioners to the Board's list of approved persons, and the appointments of 104 current community panel members to the cross-profession list.

The Board is currently undertaking a recruitment campaign for WA, SA, Tas., ACT and NT practitioners who express an interest and meet the required criteria to be panel members to sit on professional standards panels closing on Monday 4 August 2014. Please see the Board's website for more details about this campaign.

Queensland – new arrangements for handling notifications from 1 July 2014

From **1 July 2014** a new law comes in to effect in Queensland, the Health Ombudsman Act 2013.

From this date, all complaints about Queensland health practitioners will be received by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) who will either manage the matters or refer them to the relevant National Board to manage.

Complaints that were made to AHPRA or National Boards before 1 July 2014 will generally continue to be managed by AHPRA on behalf of National Boards. However, under the new law the Office of the Health Ombudsman can request that a matter be referred to them to be managed. If this were to happen, AHPRA will inform both the notifier and the practitioner who is the subject of the notification.

For information about the Office of the Health Ombudsman please go to www.oho.qld.gov.au or call 133 646 (133 OHO).

Data access and research policy

AHPRA and National Boards regularly receive requests for access to data about registered practitioners. The Data access and research policy was developed by AHPRA and National Boards to maximise benefits that data access can bring, while managing risks to the privacy of practitioners whose information we have collected and hold for the purposes of the National Law and other statutory obligations.

The policy is available on the AHPRA website.

More information

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of you as an optometrist on our website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or questions about your registration or renewal please send an online enquiry form or contact AHRPA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

18 July 2014