

Communiqué

The 54th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 24 July 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.

Call for applications for Board nominee for Director of the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ)

The Board is interested in receiving applications from suitably qualified optometrists for the role of Director of the OCANZ Board that is nominated by the Board. The members of OCANZ appoint the OCANZ Board of Directors at their annual general meeting.

Interested optometrists are able to forward a current CV and supporting statement addressing the following selection criteria electronically to the Board at Katrina.xanthos@ahpra.gov.au by Friday 22 August 2014.

Selection criteria:

- holds current registration with the Optometry Board of Australia with good standing
- an experienced optometrist who possess attributes that displays integrity, thinks critically, applies expertise, can communicate constructively and has the ability to focus strategically.
- demonstrates an understanding of the objectives of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme
- previous experience as a member of an optometry regulatory authority or accreditation team would be an advantage
- not a current Optometry Board of Australia member or a member of a Board committee or advisory group that deals with matters relating to accreditation, and
- has not been an employee of OCANZ within the past two years.

Further information on OCANZ, including a copy of the organization's constitution, can be found at www.ocanz.org

Have your say: National Boards consult on practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases

All 14 National Boards are inviting practitioners, members of the community and other stakeholders to provide feedback on guidelines that will determine how, from a regulatory perspective, health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases should be managed.

Under the proposed guidelines, registered health practitioners with blood borne infectious diseases must comply with the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA) guidelines on this issue to ensure their practice does not compromise patient safety.

The CDNA offers strategic advice to governments and other key bodies on public health actions to minimise the impact of communicable diseases, and their *Australian National Guidelines for the Management of Health Care Workers known to be infected with blood-borne viruses* are endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council.

The National Boards' proposed guidelines allow health practitioners infected with a blood-borne virus to practise their profession if they comply with the CDNA guidelines. However, they may have to modify their practice. For example, they will not be able to perform certain procedures such as exposure-prone procedures if the CDNA guidelines stop them from doing so.

The current CDNA guidelines define an exposure prone procedure as a procedure where there is a risk of injury to the healthcare worker resulting in exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the worker. These procedures include those where the worker's hands (whether gloved or not) may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times.

The National Boards have published a consultation paper to support the draft guidelines. The consultation is open until 26 September 2014.

Consultation update

The Board's public consultation on the following proposed revised registration standards and guidelines has now closed:

- Professional indemnity insurance registration standard
- Recency of practice registration standard and related guidelines, and

The Board thanks the members of the profession and other stakeholders who provided feedback on these standards and guidelines.

The Board will consider the consultation feedback on each of these documents before finalising them for approval by the Ministerial Council.

Scheduled medicines guidelines

The Board was notified of the following information subsequent to the July Board meeting. The Board was due to defend legal action commenced in the Queensland Supreme Court by the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists and The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists in relation to the Optometry guidelines for use of scheduled medicines on the 4 August 2014. The legal proceedings were estimated to take longer than originally scheduled and have been rescheduled to commence on the 1 December 2014.

Out of respect for the legal process, the Board is not making further comment on this matter.

Further 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

4 August 2014