

Communiqué

The 57th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 23 October 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.

A reminder to renew your registration

Online renewal of registration has been open since October for registered optometrists. The Board encourage you to renew online prior to 30 November 2014 to avoid any late fees. Under the National Law, all registered health practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year.

Practitioners who don't renew their registration within one month of 30 November must be removed from the register of practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practice or work in Australia as an optometrist until a new application for registration is approved. A series of reminders are being sent to practitioners with a registered email address by AHPRA on behalf of the Board. The reminders include a link to online renewal. It is important that AHPRA has your current contact information so you don't miss future email and hard copy reminders to renew.

Online graduate application

Final-year students who will soon complete a Board-approved program of study can go online to apply for registration before they graduate through AHPRA's online graduate application service. This service smooths the path from study to work by enabling final-year optometry students to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. Final year students of an optometry Board approved course this year can make only one online graduate application to be eligible for general registration and endorsement for scheduled medicines.

There is a banner on the Board's homepage which will link students to information about the process.

Graduates must make an application for registration and are required to send some documents to AHPRA by mail to complete their application. Graduates can start work as soon as they are registered and their name is published on the Registers of practitioners.

Health Profession Agreement 2014/2015

The National Board and AHPRA have published the Health Profession Agreement that outlines the partnership between the National Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide to the National Board in 2014/2015.

The 2014/2015 Optometry Board of Australia and AHPRA Health Profession Agreement is available www.optometryboard.gov.au/News.

Board meeting dates and schedule 2015

The National Board approved the monthly schedule of board meetings and locations to be held outside of the national office for 2015. The Board will hold the March 2015 meeting in Sydney, NSW.

Call for applications for appointment to National Boards

Applications are sought for [appointments to upcoming vacancies](#) on a number of National Boards, including the Optometry Board of Australia.

Actions to improve the consumer experience

HIC report published online

A report recommending ways to improve consumers' interaction with the National Scheme has been published, along with a list of actions that AHPRA is taking to address the issues raised.

In March this year, AHPRA commissioned the Health Issues Centre Victoria (HIC) to investigate and make suggestions to improve the consumer experience of the National Scheme that regulates health practitioners.

AHPRA has published the HIC report – *Setting things right: Improving the consumer experience of AHPRA including the joint notification process between AHPRA and OHSC*. Accompanying the report is AHPRA's action plan, which outlines what work AHPRA has done to date, and what will be done next, to address the report's recommendations. Both documents can be accessed via [AHPRA's News page](#).

AHPRA has committed to reporting publicly on its actions to improve the experience of people who make a notification (complaint about a health practitioner).

The HIC drew on historical and current data to come up with clear picture of the current experience of consumers who have made a complaint about a practitioner. The research focused on the experience of Victorian notifiers, but AHPRA's action plan applies the improvements nationally.

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 AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Ian Bluntish

Acting Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

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