

Communiqué

The 59th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 18 December 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.

Season's Greetings

This meeting was the last for 2014 and it affords the National Board an opportunity to reflect on the previous year of work. The National Board would like to extend its thanks and season's greetings to everyone who has supported the Board in its work during 2014 and wish them all the best for 2015.

Looking forward

The Board reflected that 2014 had been an extremely busy and challenging year, with a significant amount of work related to the legal challenge regarding the Guideline for use of scheduled medicines conducted. Looking forward the Board hopes to seek approval of its revised standards and other supporting guidelines by Ministers in 2015 and will meet in the first half of the year to finalise a strategic regulatory work plan for 2015 and on into 2016.

2014 Revised guidelines for use of scheduled medicines

The Board published the revised guidelines on 8 December 2014 that included a [FAQ and fact sheet](#). The Board would like to clarify that an optometrist endorsed for scheduled medicines who has made a referral to an ophthalmologist within four months of commencing treatment for chronic glaucoma can continue to treat a patient for chronic glaucoma if indicated. The treating optometrist is not required to cease treatment at the four month point if the patient has not been able to consult with an ophthalmologist. A clinical record is to be made that confirms the patient is still awaiting consultation by an ophthalmologist and treatment for chronic glaucoma can continue.

Call for applications to the Scheduled Medicines Advisory Committee of the Board

The Board invites applications from persons interested in being appointed to the Board's Scheduled Medicines Advisory Committee (the Committee), who will advise the Board on the matters with respect to the administration or prescribing of scheduled medicines by optometrists for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.

Applications are now sought for appointment from optometrists who hold a scheduled medicine endorsement under the National Law or a law of a participating jurisdiction. Expressions of interest close on 9 February 2015. Application forms and further information is available via the [Committees](#) webpage.

2015 March Board meeting, Sydney

The Board agreed to hold an interstate Board meeting in NSW for 2015 to meet colleagues and discuss any professional issues regarding regulation with registrants. The Board members would like to invite registrants to meet and discuss any pertinent issues with them on Wednesday 25 March 2015 from 5.30pm to 6.45pm. The event will be hosted by the NSW office of the Optometry Association (OA), 130 Great North Rd, Five Dock. Numbers are limited and the RSVP can be sent to Andrew McKinnon, CEO at Andrew@oaansw.com.au by Monday 23 March 2015. The Board looks forward to seeing you there.

Renewal

Registered optometrists were required to renew their registration by the end of November 2014.

If you did not renew by 31 December 2014 your registration has lapsed. Your name will be removed from the [national register of practitioners](#) and you must cease to practise optometry immediately. If you wish to keep practising you must make a new application for registration.

Fast track application forms are available on the Board website under *Forms* or by phoning the AHPRA Customer Service Team on 1300 419 495 during January. If submitting a fast track application, you cannot practise until your application is processed and your registration details are updated on the national register.

An FAQ about renewal is available on the [Board's website](#).

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.

Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

23 January 2015