



Communiqué: Optometry Board of Australia

September 2017 meeting

The 86th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 September 2017 via teleconference.

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.

Newsletter from the Board highlights early career optometrists as important stakeholders

The Board released its latest newsletter on 25 September 2017. In the newsletter, the Board advised practitioners it intends to engage more directly with optometrists who are in the early stages of their career, which it regards as a strategic priority. As the future of the optometry profession, the Board views early career optometrists as important stakeholders in Australian optometry regulation.

As part of this work, the Board is co-hosting a networking event with Early Career Optometrists SA on 9 November 2017 and this will be an opportunity for optometrists and optometry students to meet the Board, learn how to become a Board or Committee member and shape the future of optometry regulation.

Read more in the Board's [latest newsletter](#).

Accreditation Systems Review releases draft report

The Board considered the *Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions - Draft Report* that was released on 4 September 2017.

The draft outlines possible reform options to streamline accreditation processes and enhance governance structures within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The aim of the report is to achieve greater cost-effectiveness through consistency and collaboration across professions and delivery of an educational foundation for a health workforce capable of responding to the evolving needs of the community.

More information is available on the COAG Health Council [website](#).

Legislative changes passed to establish a new National Board for paramedicine and provide stronger protection for the public

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* has been passed by the Queensland Parliament and has received royal assent. This Bill contains amendments to the National Law that will apply in all states and territories except Western Australia (South Australia also needs to make a regulation to give effect to the amendments). The Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia has also passed a corresponding amendment Bill (the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Amendment Bill 2017*) which will now be considered by the Legislative Council.

The passing of the Bill in Queensland marks a significant day for health practitioner regulation as these are the first legislative amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), since the start of the National Scheme in 2010. The changes to the National Law will enable the Paramedicine Board of Australia to be established with the appointment of inaugural board members by Health Ministers in the near future. Also, new measures that strengthen public protection will be introduced and there will be formal recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

To find out what the amendments include, read the [news item](#) on the AHPRA website.

Decisions about proposed amendments to the National Law are made by health ministers and the governments of all states and territories, with the changes progressed through the Queensland Parliament (as the host jurisdiction of the National Law), and the Western Australian Parliament. AHPRA will work with National Boards, governments, health departments, professions and consumer representatives to support the implementation of the changes to the National Law into daily operations.

While the Queensland Bill has received royal assent, commencement of many of the changes to the National Law are likely to occur in a staggered process over the coming months.

The Health Practitioner Regulation and National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017 as passed by the Queensland Parliament can be accessed the [Queensland Parliament website](#).

More information on the regulation of paramedics under the National Scheme can be accessed on the [AHPRA website](#).

Are your contact details up to date?

It is important that your contact details are up to date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check your details via the [Login icon](#) at the top right of the AHPRA website. Email accounts need to be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



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 details or help with questions about your registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or [contact AHPRA](#), send an [online enquiry form](#) or call on 1300 419 495.

Ian Bluntish

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

October 2017

The Optometry Board of Australia is the regulator of optometrists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent optometrists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for optometrists and managing notifications (complaints) about optometrists and optometry students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's optometrists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and Qld which have co-regulatory arrangements.*