



COAG Health Council

Mr Ian Bluntish
Chair
Optometry Board of Australia
GPO Box 9958
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Bluntish

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2017 providing the Optometry Board of Australia's (the Board) proposed revised *Endorsement for scheduled medicines registration standard* (the revised registration standard). Thank you for also providing a copy of the Board's revised guidelines for endorsement for scheduled medicines.

Pursuant to section 12 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), the Ministerial Council has decided to approve the revised registration standard as recommended by the Board.

Further, as requested by the Board, the Ministerial Council also agreed to approve a modification to the wording of the approval of endorsement in relation to scheduled medicines issued in accordance with section 14 of the National Law to endorse the registration of an optometrist as being qualified to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply or **use** topical schedule 2, 3, or 4 medicines **for the purposes of the practice of optometry** (the section 14 approval).

The complete modified approval under section 14 of the National Law will now read:

- Class of health practitioners – any person registered as an optometrist under the National Law whose registration has been endorsed by the Board in accordance with section 94 of the National Law
- Type of use – endorsed as qualified to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply or use a class of scheduled medicines (as per below)
- Class of scheduled medicines – topical schedule 2, 3, or 4 medicines for the purposes of the practice of optometry, included in the list approved and published by the Board.

In approving the revised registration standard and agreeing the minor change to the section 14 approval, Ministers noted advice from the Board that:

- Transferring the list of scheduled medicines from the registration standard to the guidelines should reduce administrative costs and time involved in keeping the list up to date and enable the Board to responsively remove scheduled medicines from the list where medicines are no longer available on the market (eg due to patient safety reasons), or to add newly available medicines to the list in a timely manner and improve patient access to current topical eye medicines that endorsed optometrists are qualified to prescribe. Ministers noted the Board's commitment to consultation with stakeholders as described in the revised guidelines and to providing further ongoing opportunities for key eye health care professional bodies to consider and advise on the appropriateness of any future new medicines being added to the list.

- The word 'use' in the current section 14 approval appears to have been unintentionally omitted when the request was originally submitted in 2010 and that updating the wording from 'treatment of conditions of the eye' to 'for the purposes of the practice of optometry' would align with the terminology used in the majority of relevant state and territory legislation.

Finally, Ministers agreed with the Board's proposal that the approved revised registration standard and guidelines take effect approximately three months after receipt of our approval to ensure a smooth transition. We note that the revised standard and guidelines will be published before the changes commence to ensure that stakeholders are given advance notice of the revisions.

Thank you for recommending that the revised registration standard and modified section 14 approval be approved by Ministers following the Board's completion of its scheduled review and consultation with stakeholders.

Yours sincerely



Ms Meegan Fitzharris MLA
Chair

Ministerial Council

31/5 / 2018

cc: Mr Martin Fletcher, CEO, AHPRA: martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au