



## Communiqué: Optometry Board of Australia

### March 2019 meeting

The 101<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 March 2019 in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from these meetings 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.

#### **Report back from 'Close the Gap for Vision by 2020' Conference**

The Board sent its representative member, Stuart Aamodt to the conference held on 14–15 March 2019 in Alice Springs. The conference was co-hosted by Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne and Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory, supported by partners, Vision 2020 Australia, Optometry Australia and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists. The Board noted eye health outcomes for Aboriginal and Health Islander Peoples needed further improvements and in the context of cultural safety.

#### **Consultation with the Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee on Endorsement for scheduled medicines registration standard and guidelines**

The Board consulted with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (AHPRA) Scheduled Medicines Expert Committee (SMEC) whose membership comprises qualified health practitioners, academic researchers and educators with expertise in the fields of pharmacy, pharmacology including expertise in the therapeutic use of scheduled medicines, the quality use of medicines and adverse medicine events. Feedback was sought from SMEC on a draft scoping paper for the review of the *Endorsement for scheduled medicines registration standard* and an Endorsement for scheduled medicines targeted consultation paper on administrative changes to the *Guidelines for use of scheduled medicines*. Following the SMEC meeting, the targeted consultation paper has been distributed to stakeholders for feedback.

#### **Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand 2019-20 budget submission and five-year plan**

The Board and AHPRA are currently considering the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand's (OCANZ) 2019-20 budget submission and five-year plan so that a new funding agreement can be entered into by AHPRA and OCANZ.

#### **Consultation on the Accreditation systems review final report**

The Board supported a final joint National Boards and AHPRA submission to the consultation paper on the recommendations and proposed governance models of the Accreditation systems review final report.

#### **Have your say: How should we define 'cultural safety'?**

AHPRA, the National Boards and Accreditation Authorities in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) which regulates registered health practitioners in Australia have partnered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) to release a [public consultation](#).

Together, they are seeking feedback on a proposed definition of 'cultural safety' to develop an agreed, national baseline definition that can be used as a foundation for embedding cultural safety across all functions in the National Scheme and for use by the National Health Leadership Forum.

In total, there are 44 organisations represented in this consultation, which is being coordinated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group (the Strategy Group), which is convened by AHPRA, and the NHLF.

The consultation is a continuation of the work by the National Scheme's Strategy Group that has achieving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as its overall goal. Members of the Group include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health leaders and members from AHPRA, National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and NSW Councils.

The six-week consultation is open to the public. Everyone interested in helping to shape the definition of 'cultural safety' that will be used in the National Scheme and by NHLF members is warmly invited to share their views.

The [consultation](#) is open until 5pm AEST, Wednesday 15 May 2019.

Help define this important term for the National Scheme. For more information read the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **Titles in health advertising – how to get it right**

AHPRA and National Boards have published a new resource to help practitioners understand their legal obligations when using titles in health advertising.

The titles tool addresses the uncertainty some practitioners might have around this issue and outlines some of the common pitfalls that can result in titles being considered misleading under the National Law<sup>1</sup>.

Misuse of a protected title, specialist title or endorsements is an offence under sections 113–119 of the National Law or may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken against a registered health practitioner under Part 8 of the National Law. However, advertisers should also be aware that while use of some titles may not necessarily breach title protections under sections 113–119, they may be considered false, misleading or deceptive under the advertising provisions in the National Law (section 133).

The titles tool is the latest in a series of [resources and support materials](#) developed to help health practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services check and correct their advertising so it complies with the National Law. The [titles tool](#) is available in the *Advertising resources* section of the AHPRA website.

<sup>1</sup> The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

### **COAG Health Council communiqué**

The COAG Health Council met on Friday 8 March in Adelaide. Items of relevance included a plan to develop a medical workforce strategy, a briefing on the Dental Board of Australia's proposed revised scope of practice standard, cultural safety for health professionals, and options for a nationally consistent approach to the regulation of spinal manipulation of children. A copy of the communiqué can be accessed [here](#).

### **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](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

For more details or help with questions about your registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Scheme, refer to information published on [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://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**

April 2019

*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.