



Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Practice
Chinese Medicine
Chiropractic
Dental
Medical
Medical Radiation Practice
Nursing and Midwifery
Occupational Therapy
Optometry
Osteopathy
Pharmacy
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Psychology

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Media release

10 November 2016

Annual Report reveals continued growth in health professions providing services across Australia

More than 657,000 health practitioners are now registered as part of Australia's national registration and accreditation scheme, as detailed in the [2015/16 annual report](#) published today by AHPRA, representing a growth of 20,000 more health practitioners over the past year.

The 2015/16 annual report by AHPRA and the National health practitioner Boards is a comprehensive record of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

The report provides a nationwide snapshot and highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

'The regulation of over 660,000 registered health practitioners across 14 health professions and eight states and territories is an important task,' said AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher. 'There are many things to consider in regulation – but there is only one main focus, and that is patient safety.'

'The annual report gives unique insight into the accomplishments and lessons learned over the past 12 months and provides direction for the year ahead.'

Highlights of the past year include:

- **More practitioners:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners across the 14 regulated professions. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, totalling 153,710.
- **A simplified renewal process:** Online registration renewals reached a new high – with over 98% of registrants renewing online and on time, making it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.
- **Strengthened checking of criminal history:** More than 66,000 criminal history checks were conducted in Australia and overseas to ensure public safety.
- **Greater awareness of the National Scheme:** A nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public rolled out across social media and in print advertising.
- **Growth in notifications:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). Just under half of all notifications were made by a patient, relative or member of the public. AHPRA closed 5,227 matters in the year.
- **Better information to improve the notifications process:** Better information and communication with both notifiers and practitioners to ensure the steps and processes involved are clear, along with a continued focus on reducing the time it takes to manage a notification.
- **Greater transparency:** A focus on improving transparency and accountability saw the introduction of quarterly performance reporting in April 2016. These reports are accessible [via the AHPRA website](#).

- **Enforcing the National Law:** AHPRA prosecuted 9 individuals in the magistrate's court for statutory offences under the National law in 2015/16. Eleven cases of falsely claiming to be a registered health practitioner were also successfully prosecuted before the courts. Of the health, performance and conduct matters decided nationally by tribunals this year, 86.6% resulted in disciplinary action.
- **Improved monitoring and compliance to ensure public safety:** 2,532 practitioners were being monitored for health, performance and/or conduct in 2015/16. A National Restrictions Library was launched, which currently contains 73 restrictions (conditions and undertakings) to improve national consistency.
- **Developing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce:** Though small in number, this relatively new profession grew by more than 50% over the past year, from 391 to 587 registrants. It's the fastest growing profession in the National Scheme.
- **A self-sustaining financial model:** We recorded a net surplus of \$1.85 million in 2015/16, with 88% of income coming from registration fees. AHPRA worked closely with the National Boards to keep fees to health practitioners as low as possible, with six boards reducing fees, three boards freezing fees and five boards' fees rising no more than CPI.

'Greater transparency of what we do and how we do it has been an important focus for AHPRA and the National Boards over the past year,' said AHPRA's Agency Management Committee Chair, Mr Michael Gorton AM.

'We have also had significant and positive feedback in the past year. In August 2015, an independent review of the National Scheme was released, recognising AHPRA's "unique and substantial achievement". Then, in November 2015, a review of the quality of healthcare in Australia cited the National Scheme as making Australia a leader among OECD countries.'

'National Boards work closely with AHPRA to continually improve the effectiveness, consistency and efficiency of the National Scheme by developing new initiatives and improving our processes,' says Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Forum of NRAS Chairs and Chair of the Medical Board of Australia

'We are committed to working with a range of our partners across the health system to ensure the work of regulation is well understood and works well for both the public and health practitioners.'

To view the 2015/16 annual report, along with supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance, see www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016
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