

Consultation report: updating Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners

November 2025

Introduction

The Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (MRPBA) regularly reviews and updates its guidance for the medical radiation profession. Recently the Board consulted on updated *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners (Professional capabilities)* and now provides an

The *Professional capabilities* identify the minimum knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed for safe and competent practice as a medical radiation practitioner in Australia. They are used by the Board to guide good safe practice, and support and guide education providers to develop programs that align learning outcomes with the professional capabilities.

Regulatory context

The Board regulates the medical radiation practice profession under the National Law, covering diagnostic radiography, radiation therapy, and nuclear medicine technology. Its paramount role is to protect the public.

In revising the Professional Capabilities, the Board considered the objectives of the National Law, which include:

- facilitating high-quality education and training of health practitioners.
- building the capacity of the workforce to provide culturally safe health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- ensuring public access to health services in the public interest.
- supporting continuous development of a flexible, responsive, and sustainable workforce, and promoting innovation in education and service delivery.

The Board also aligned its work with the guiding principles of the National Scheme, including:

- protection of the public and maintaining public confidence in practitioner safety.
- developing a culturally safe and respectful health workforce responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, contributing to the elimination of racism.

Practice and workforce context

The updated Professional Capabilities build upon the 2020 version and reflect key developments in practice over the past five years, including:

- the growth of theranostics and hybrid imaging and therapy techniques
- expanded use of medicines and a stronger focus on patient and cultural safety.
- the emergence of generative artificial intelligence, adding to the profession's strong digital health capability.

A new leadership domain recognises practitioners' role in contributing to and leading patient-centred, cost-effective, and safe care. Leadership is viewed not as personnel management, but as engagement with the health system through influence, advocacy, and stewardship.

While the Professional Capabilities describe minimum safe practice, practitioners may extend their skills in emerging areas or overlapping scopes of practice. This dynamic environment highlights the need for sound professional judgment and ethical decision-making.

As of 31 December 2024, there were 20,861 registered practitioners: 16,487 (79%) diagnostic radiographers, 3,005 (14%) radiation therapists, and 1,389 (7%) nuclear medicine technologists, with 0.7% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The workforce is approximately 70% female and 30% male, with minimal other gender representation. Over the past decade, the profession has grown by 27%, averaging 2.7% annual growth, with a current year-on-year increase of 4.3%.

Context of the review

In July 2024, the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia engaged KPMG Australia to facilitate the review and revision of the *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners*. KPMG used a Project Working Group comprising of registered medical radiation practitioners, education providers, accreditation committee members, nominees from professional associations, community members and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people to guide the review and revision process.

The Project Working Group supported by KPMG met regularly between July and September 2024.

National Board priorities

The MRPBA asked KPMG and the Project Working Group to consider a number of issues when revising the Professional capabilities, including;

- Align key capability descriptions with contemporary best practice.
- Embed patient-centred care and cultural safety as core professional principles.
- Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the workforce.
- Retain, where possible, a CanMEDS-based structure consistent with other regulated professions.
- Use consistent descriptions for modalities where safe practice requires the same knowledge and skills.
- Adopt common terminology used across health professions.
- Strengthen recognition of digital health capabilities to support safe, effective use of technology and data.
- Structure the capabilities to enable efficient recognition of skills and adaptability to an assistant workforce model.

Process of Review

An iterative approach was applied to the development of the consultation draft of revised professional capabilities. This included a review of current literature, individual and group discovery consultations and sharing and receiving feedback from the Project Working Group. These were followed by preliminary and public consultation on the draft updated Professional capabilities.

Themes from Preliminary consultation

Preliminary consultation (Dec 2024 – Feb 2025) tested proposed changes and operational implications. Overall, feedback was supportive, leading to refinements ahead of public consultation.

Themes from public consultation

Public consultation commenced on 24 March 2025 and finished on 28 May 2025 and received over 30 submissions.

Feedback from public consultation highlighted broad support for the updated Professional Capabilities but raised several considerations for implementation. Stakeholders emphasised the need to clearly distinguish graduate from experienced practitioner expectations, particularly around complex decision-making. Some questioned the feasibility of delivering the expanded capabilities within existing curricula and clinical placement structures, warning of possible workload pressures. Some submissions cautioned against tasks perceived as exceeding legal or professional scope, such as anaphylaxis management or radiopharmaceutical manufacturing, and some questioned the inclusion of CT and mammography as

standard competencies. Industrial and timing issues were also noted, with potential misalignment to enterprise agreements and widespread preference for a phased introduction beyond January 2026.

There was strong endorsement for culturally safe, person-centred practice, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The inclusion of digital health, AI, and emerging technologies was well received, though respondents sought clearer definitions and alignment with National Boards guidance. Leadership and advocacy were recognised as valuable but questioned how these would be established as graduate-level expectations.

Feedback on the draft Low Value Care Statement was mixed. While generally supported, some professional associations raised concerns about potential boundary overlap with other professions. The Board noted that reducing low-value care aligns with both the [Code of Conduct](#) for Health Professions (6.1) and the Medical Board's Good Practice Guide. Recognising the importance of an interprofessional approach, the Board has deferred publication pending a joint initiative with other National Boards.

Summary of key changes

Following consultation, the MRPBA approved the updated Professional Capabilities for Medical Radiation Practice, effective 30 March 2026. Key changes include:

- minor adjustments to overall structure.
- clearer expectations for recognising and responding to patient deterioration, including anaphylaxis management.
- stronger emphasis on safe care and responding to family, domestic, and sexual violence.
- addition of digital health, data management, and health informatics capabilities.
- consistent description of computed tomography across all divisions.
- regrouping of modality descriptions (e.g., mammography, angiography).
- new capabilities supporting practitioners and graduates in workplace teaching, learning, and assessment.
- introduction of Domain 6, describing leadership and stewardship behaviours for sustainable health-system care.

Publication and commencement

The Board published the approved *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice* (2026) on 7 November 2025 to allow sufficient time for practitioners, employers, education providers, professional associations, industrial unions and the public to become familiar with the new minimum requirements for medical radiation practitioners.

The Professional capabilities will come into effect on **30 March 2026**

Supporting implementation

To support implementation of the updated Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners the Board

- set a revised date on which the Professional capabilities will come into effect being 30 March 2026.
- published the Professional capabilities and related documents on 7 November 2025 to give all stakeholders sufficient time to be ready for when they come into effect
- developed a range of information sheets that provides more information about specific topics and described how all stakeholders have a role to work together to implement the Professional capabilities safely and effectively.