



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

AHPRA REPORT

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Update from the CEO

Welcome to the first *AHPRA Report* of 2012 – updating everyone interested in the work of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) in partnership with the National Boards.

It has been a busy start to 2012 as we prepare for the four new professions who are joining the National Scheme from 1 July 2012: National Boards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, medical radiation practice and occupational therapy. Registration for these professions is now open.

The smooth introduction of the 2012 new professions will be a major focus for AHPRA this year. While there are many lessons which have been learned from the start-up of the National Scheme, there are also unique challenges for these new professions because they are not currently registered in every state and territory. In addition to the 16,800 practitioners in these professions who are currently registered with a state or territory board (and who will transition automatically into the Scheme), we are anticipating around 17,000 applications from practitioners who have never been registered before.

There is ongoing work both big and small across AHPRA. Our over-riding goal is to continue to improve our service, consistency and our capability to deliver high-quality services. In this issue of *AHPRA Report*, you will read about a number of initiatives including our registration lifecycle management project, which will mean that every practitioner has the same registration number for life. You can also learn about our contribution to the environment and efficiency through producing smaller registration



certificates. In the last *AHPRA Report* we announced advances in capacity for online applications for registration, including for enrolled nurses to become registered nurses, and for current provisional registrants to apply online for general registration. The response from applicants has been very positive. Of the 42,000 applications for registration received since 1 July 2011, more than half have been received online.

In conjunction with the Medical Board of Australia, AHPRA has nearly concluded a major project to complete the specialists register for medicine. In 2011, AHPRA wrote to all medical practitioners with general and/or specialist registration (approximately 70,000), advising them how their specialty and qualifications are currently recorded on the national register, and inviting them to advise us of any inaccuracies. This has been necessary as not all jurisdictions had specialist medical registers before the start of the National Scheme and the data we inherited were incomplete. As a result, AHPRA had to rely on multiple sources of data, for example, Medicare and specialist colleges, to create the specialists medical register. Work will continue over time to ensure the consistent publication of practitioner's initial medical qualification. The specialists medical register provides important information to the »

public about the specialties, fields of specialist practice and qualifications of medical practitioners.

In this edition, we also highlight the start of the annual nursing and midwifery renewal. This will see around 330,000 nurses and midwives renew their registration in the lead up to 31 May 2012. Close to 85 per cent of nurses and midwives renewed their registration online in 2011. We are hoping that this year even more practitioners renew online as this is the quickest and easiest renewal method.

As well, this month the Medical Board of Australia and AHPRA announced their joint response with the Australian

Medical Council to the report of the parliamentary inquiry into International Medical Graduates (IMGs). Our three bodies welcome the focus on IMGs and are collaborating to identify how to improve services by harnessing the opportunities delivered by the National Scheme.

I hope you continue to find *AHPRA Report* informative. We welcome your feedback on any of the issues highlighted in this issue. You can contact me at martin.fletcher@ahpra.gov.au.

Martin Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer

Nurses and midwives must soon renew registration

About 330,000 nurses and midwives across Australia are due to renew their registration by 31 May 2012. Online renewals for nurses and midwives opens in early April, when the first email renewal reminders will also be sent. AHPRA urges nurses and midwives to look out for emails from AHPRA reminding them to renew.

A comprehensive communications campaign has started, with a flyer distributed to key stakeholders, including government employers and professional associations, urging practitioners to check and update their contact details previously provided to AHPRA.

AHPRA welcomes the support it has received in spreading the 'update your contact details' message to the professions. This has helped ensure as many nurses and midwives as possible receive email registration renewal reminders, as well as hard copies to those who haven't provided their email address.

Close to 85 per cent of nurses and midwives renewed their registration online in 2011. We are hoping that this year even more practitioners renew online as this is the quickest and easiest renewal method.

For the 2012 renewal period, AHPRA has introduced a new online facility for nurses and midwives who do not want to renew their registration. Practitioners who 'opt out' online from renewing their registration will not receive further renewal reminders. It will also provide AHPRA and the Nursing and Midwifery Board with better data on the number of nurses and midwives who have chosen to opt out, to distinguish them from practitioners who intended to renew, but did not do so on time.

Consistent with the National Law, practitioners will need to complete declarations when applying to renew their registration that they meet the Board's registration standards. Separate declarations will need to be made in relation to registration as a nurse and a midwife.



The Board has set an annual registration fee of \$160, an increase of \$45 on the previous year. There is no cross subsidisation between professions in the National Scheme, so the Board must set a fee that enables it to meet the full costs of effectively regulating nurses and midwives in Australia and meet its legal responsibilities under the National Law.

This includes the Board's share of AHPRA's costs in implementing the National Scheme in each state and territory, as well as funding of its own work program, which includes developing or reviewing policy, professional practice codes, standards, guidelines and position statements.

Fees also contribute to the cost of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). ANMAC is responsible for accrediting and monitoring more than 400 nursing and midwifery programs of study leading to registration or endorsement.

The Board has also re-instituted the late fee for registration renewal applications received in the month after the registration expiry date (31 May 2012). The late fee was suspended in the first year of the National Scheme but was reinstituted by all National Boards from 2011/12. The late fee recognises the additional costs of managing late renewals and is payable in addition to the annual registration fee.

For further information, see the [Nursing and Midwifery Board's website](#).

Registration applications now open for 2012 professions

Registration applications are now open for practitioners in the four professions joining the National Scheme in July this year, and practitioners are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible.

From 1 July 2012, practitioners in the following professions must be registered with their National Board to practise anywhere in Australia:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice¹
- Chinese medicine²
- medical radiation practice, and
- occupational therapy.

Registration application forms for practitioners in these professions are published on each National Board website, accessible from the [AHPRA website](#). Also published on the National Board websites are the registration standards all practitioners must meet and FAQs.

- 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners working in the Northern Territory (NT) are required to register in the National Scheme. For those outside the NT, only those who are required by their employer to be registered must do so. All other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners working outside the NT can keep working after 1 July 2012 without being registered using their existing titles e.g. Aboriginal health worker, drug and alcohol worker or mental health worker.
- 2 Including Chinese medicine practitioners, acupuncturists, Chinese herbal medicine practitioners, oriental medicine practitioners and Chinese herbal dispensers.



Practitioners in these health professions who are not currently registered with a state or territory board should apply for registration as soon as possible. It is strongly recommended that practitioners complete their applications carefully, ensuring all supporting information is correctly compiled.

Practitioners who are currently registered with a state or territory board are not required to apply for national registration, as they will automatically transition into the National Scheme.

We encourage practitioners to help spread this important message and refer anyone with questions to the [AHPRA website](#).

For further information, see the [AHPRA website](#).

Practitioner audit

A pilot to audit practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards is now underway. The purpose of the audit is to ensure that registered health practitioners are meeting the mandatory registration standards, so that the public has access to safe, high-quality health practitioners.

The pilot, run jointly by AHPRA and the Pharmacy Board of Australia, was agreed to by all National Boards.

Feedback from the pilot will inform the set-up of the auditing framework for use by other National Boards from 2013/14. The pilot will help determine the frequency, size and type of audits required, as well as establish a methodology and process for reporting findings.

Practitioners have been selected at random for audit, and those being audited have received an audit notice letter outlining what they are required to do to comply.

For further information, see the [Pharmacy Board of Australia's website](#).

Registration lifecycle implemented

Practitioners registered with AHPRA will now have the same registration number for life.

Previously, if a practitioner took a break from their registration, they were issued with a new number on re-registration. In some instances, different registration numbers were assigned if the practitioner held more than one registration (for example specialist and general) within a profession.

These numbers have been consolidated into the practitioner's current single registration number. Practitioners will now only have one registration number per profession in which they are registered. Other improvements and amendments as a result of this project will be progressively implemented.

For further information on these changes, see the FAQ and fact sheet on the [AHPRA website](#).

Psychology supervisor list now available online

The Psychology Board of Australia has published a supervisor list on its website which is searchable by location and supervision category.

The list includes the name and principal place of practice of supervisors, which is already held on the [national register of practitioners](#), along with additional information about the types of supervision a psychologist is eligible to provide and, if the psychologist has given their consent, their contact email address.

The list of approved supervisors is accessible by practitioners and the public, and is particularly useful for fourth year psychology students and provisional

psychologists seeking a supervisor for the 4+2 program, final year Master and Doctorate students, and general psychologists seeking a supervisor for the registrar program leading to area of practice endorsement.

The list of Board-approved supervisors includes more than 5,200 psychologists, including those who were approved as supervisors by a state or territory board before the start of the Scheme, and were automatically recognised as approved supervisors by the National Board. It also includes psychologists who have applied to the National Board and been approved as a supervisor after 1 July 2010.

For further information, including FAQ, see the [Psychology Board of Australia's website](#).

Going green with smaller certificates

Certificates of registration have been reduced in size from A4 to A5 to reduce paper use and environmental impact.

In 2011/12, AHPRA will distribute approximately 550,000 certificates of registration on behalf of National Boards, so this small change will make a big difference to our environmental footprint. The content and style of the certificate remains unchanged.

The certificate size has been reduced and the certificate, registration card and invoice have been combined into a single sheet; enabling us to achieve significant environmental and cost savings, halve our paper use and reduce postage and printing costs.

These new certificates have been issued to practitioners at renewal since 23 January 2012. Both new and previous



certificate styles remain valid, but the best source of accurate and up-to-date information about practitioners' registration status is the [national register of practitioners](#).

Health practitioners can also download and print copies of their certificate via the practitioner online service on the [AHPRA website](#).

Advertising health services

Each of the 10 National Boards has published an advertising *Fact Sheet* and *FAQ* on their websites. These documents, in conjunction with the *Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services* issued by each Board, are designed to assist health practitioners in understanding their obligations under the National Law. Neither AHPRA nor the National Boards can offer advice directly to practitioners about their advertising.

Section 133 of the National Law outlines what constitutes unacceptable advertising, including:

- making misleading claims
- offering an inducement such as a gift or discount or time-limited offers (unless the relevant terms and conditions are also included)
- using testimonials
- creating unreasonable expectations of beneficial treatment, or

- encouraging the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of a service.

Practitioners are encouraged to ensure their advertising complies with the National Law and to read the guidelines, fact sheets and FAQ.

Go to the relevant National Board website, via the [AHPRA website](#), to access these documents.

AHPRA people: Meet Diana Newcombe

Diana Newcombe started as AHPRA's South Australia State Manager in September 2011 and is relishing the opportunity to bring a fresh perspective to the implementation of the National Scheme.

"I feel privileged to have joined AHPRA at a formative point in our development," Diana said. "The National Boards and AHPRA have reached a point in their evolution of which they can be justifiably proud."

Diana, whose background spans both the public and private sector, including work with the independent healthcare sector, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and in international regulation, is pleased to be able to bring a different outlook to the work of AHPRA.

"I have had the opportunity to work internationally with many different cultures and my experience, particularly in the areas of communication and building effective working relationships, seemed a strong fit with the work required to deliver the National Scheme," she said.

"The National Scheme is generating opportunities for new ways of working, including the forging of new alliances. I am pleased to be a part of these innovative groups that are working together to generate creative initiatives that previously were not possible and are now making a positive contribution to healthcare in Australia."

Before joining AHPRA, Diana worked with an international law firm, where she helped to design processes for international management of legal work for multinational clients. The work had an important focus on consistency as a foundation for quality service provision.

"It's always a challenge to develop innovative responses to the complex issues that we are dealing with, including the challenge of reconciling different issues and approaches across boards, integrating the four new professions and focusing on the priorities that will deliver the best long-term results," Diana said.

"Co-ordinating our commitment to achieve consistency of process across all levels of the National Scheme is an essential aspect of my work."



"Without that consistency we will not be placed to effectively implement the requirements of the National Scheme, especially when collaborating more widely with the other organisations that contribute to healthcare in Australia," Diana said.

Diana is proud to be part of an organisation that continues to tackle complex issues in uncharted waters and was quickly impressed by the work of the National Boards and AHPRA, particularly the staff in South Australia.

"Our Directors of Registrations and Notifications have chaired the National Standing Committees of their respective teams and have addressed a slew of issues, large and small, in addition to their normal work," Diana said.

The SA office's focus is on customer service, developing its capability to make better decisions and the successful implementation of new initiatives.

Diana has more than 15 years of diverse management and legal experience in both Australia and the United Kingdom. She has a strong background in medical and administrative law, and investigative expertise with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Diana's experience in the United Kingdom included regulatory compliance, and corporate and clinical governance in healthcare settings, as well as major organisational reviews with an international legal firm. During this time, she also advised clients on regulatory compliance programs. Diana holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Law and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Australian National University.

Advice and information

Information online

Our [website](#) is a great place to start when you are looking for information on many different questions about the National Scheme. Try our new and improved search function to find the information you need quickly.

Email advice

Submit an [online enquiry form](#) any time and we will get back to you as soon as possible. There are categories of enquiries to select, reflecting the most common information requests, including getting your user ID and pass code reissued, or checking your application status.

Phone

Our customer service teams in each of our state and territory offices have a detailed knowledge and understanding of our rules, standards, guidance and advice. Call from within Australia on 1300 419 495 between 09:00am – 05:00pm local time or from overseas on +61 3 8708 9001 between 09:00am – 05:00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time Monday to Friday.

State and territory offices

AHPRA has an office in each capital city. [Contact details](#) are published on our website.



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Nursing and Midwifery	Psychology

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Publications and other information

National Boards produce registration standards, along with guidance and advice that expand on these standards, to support professional practice. We publish detailed information on the National Board websites about registration standards and a wide range of general news and information relevant to health practitioners. You can access all publications through the [AHPRA website](#) which provides a portal to the websites of the National Boards.

Current consultations

The National Boards frequently seek feedback from the professions, the community and other stakeholders on a range of issues. Check the National Board websites regularly via the [AHPRA website](#) to keep up to date with current consultations.

Think before you print

Any comments?

If you have any comments about this report, please [email us](#).

Further information can be found on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

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