

Position Statement

Using the protected title 'Acupuncturist' under the National Law

Background

A primary purpose of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) is to ensure that the Australian public can have confidence that registered health professionals have adequate education and training.

The National Law limits the use of the title 'Acupuncturist' to health practitioners who are registered in the Chinese medicine division of Acupuncturist or to health practitioners registered in other health professions who have been endorsed by their Boards as Acupuncturists.

Chinese medicine practitioners who are registered as Acupuncturists have completed an approved tertiary level education program involving at least four years of study and training.

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA) has approved accreditation standards under section 47 of the National Law to ensure that graduates of an accredited and approved Chinese medicine program are qualified for general registration in the Chinese medicine profession to practise safely and competently as an Acupuncturist.

Endorsement

In other health professions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, the National Law (section 97) enables a Board to endorse health practitioners in that profession to practise as an Acupuncturist. To be endorsed, the practitioners must have completed a relevant and acceptable qualification and comply with an approved and relevant registration standard. As at 2021, only the Medical Board of Australia has in place the processes to endorse registered medical practitioners as Acupuncturists.

The public can be assured that anyone using the title 'Acupuncturist' and providing acupuncture has adequate education and training to satisfy the requirements for registration within the division Acupuncturist or have met the requirements for endorsement to use the title.

Holding out and Criminal Offences

The National Law prohibits health practitioners from any health profession from claiming to be registered in a division of a health profession if they are not, or from claiming to be qualified to hold an endorsement that they do not hold. Registered health practitioners whose services include needling techniques cannot claim to be Acupuncturists, or claim to be qualified to be an Acupuncturist, unless they are registered in the Chinese medicine division of Acupuncturist or have their registration endorsed by their National Board.

It is a criminal offence under the National Law for unregistered health care workers using needling techniques to use the title 'Acupuncturist' or to describe themselves or advertise their services in a way which could be reasonably understood to indicate they are authorised or qualified to practise in the Chinese medicine division of Acupuncturist.

Where concerns exist about the unlawful use of the title of Acupuncturist a complaint can be made to Ahpra verbally by phoning 1300 419 495 or by submitting your concerns [online](#) to assess if there has been a breach of the National Law.