

## Communiqué

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### February 2020 meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The 120<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 26 February 2020 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in Melbourne. The Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) also met on the same day as the Board meeting.

The Board publishes this communiqué on our website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. At each meeting the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

#### Vacancies advertised for Board positions

Vacancies are currently advertised for practitioner members from New South Wales and Western Australia.

All National Board appointments are made by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. If you are interested, please visit the [AHPRA National Boards recruitment page](#) to download the information guide and application form. More information is provided about eligibility requirements specific to these advertised vacancies, National Board member roles, and the application process.

For enquiries, please contact [statutory appointments](#). The closing date is Monday **30 March 2020 5pm** AEST.

#### Upcoming registrant information forums

The next information forum will be in Sydney on 24 April 2020. We will be in touch with NSW registrants in the next couple of weeks regarding arrangements. For further information on these forums, see the recent news [item](#).

#### NRAS Combined Meeting and stakeholder meetings

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) Combined Meeting '*10 years together – the foundation for future-focused regulation*' took place on 27 and 28 February 2020 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. A highlight of the conference was the launch of the [strategy for embedding cultural safety into the health system](#). More than 400 participants attended including Agency Management Committee, National and State/Territory Board and Committee members, AHPRA staff, Health Complaint Commissioners, co-regulatory bodies, representatives from accreditation authorities, regulatory colleagues from New Zealand, and key partners.

The Board held its monthly meeting the day before and took the opportunity to hold formal stakeholder meetings with the Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council, Osteopathy Council of NSW and the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand. The Combined Meeting also provided the opportunity for all members and stakeholders to network with colleagues in regulation and focus on the future challenges.

#### Changes to mandatory notifications requirements in effect from 1 March

On 1 March 2020 the amendments to the National Law in relation to mandatory notifications take effect.

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The amendments apply in all states and territories except Western Australia and affect the mandatory reporting obligations for treating practitioners.

The threshold for reporting a concern about impairment, intoxication and practice outside of professional standards has been raised. The threshold is now reached when there is a substantial risk of harm to the public

The National Boards and Ahpra have jointly revised the mandatory notifications guidelines to reflect these amendments.

The guidelines are relevant to all registered health practitioners, and registered students in Australia. The guidelines aim to explain the mandatory notifications requirements in the National Law clearly so that practitioners, employers and education providers understand who must make a mandatory notification about a practitioner or student and when they must be made. They also aim to make it clearer when a notification does not need to be made.

Changes to the guidelines include:

- a new higher reporting threshold for when treating practitioners must make a notification about their practitioner-patients. This is to give a practitioner-patient the confidence to seek help if they need it without undue concern about a mandatory notification
- there are now two separate guidelines in place. One is for mandatory notifications about practitioners, and one for mandatory notifications about students. As there are only limited circumstances when a mandatory notification must be made about a student it was decided to develop a separate guideline that is only about students
- re-structuring of the guidelines about practitioners according to notifier type (that is treating practitioner, non-treating practitioner, employer) so that relevant information for each notifier group is easier to find
- updated flowcharts to help potential notifiers assess whether they need to make a mandatory notification, and
- introduction of risk charts that highlight risk and mitigating factors that may be relevant to deciding if a mandatory notification is required.

To help explain the requirements and raise awareness, Ahpra and National Boards have released a range of information materials to both ensure patient safety and support practitioner wellbeing.

Read the revised guidelines for [practitioners and students](#) and the [additional resources](#) developed to help explain mandatory notifications.

### **Ahpra and National Boards welcome policy directions**

Ahpra and the National Boards have welcomed two new policy directions from the COAG Health Council which reinforce that Ahpra and National Boards are to prioritise public protection in the work of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The two directions clearly state that public protection is paramount and require consultation with patient safety and health care consumer bodies on any new and revised registration standards, codes and guidelines, as well as other considerations.

The first policy direction is clear about the consideration that National Boards and Ahpra must give to the public (including vulnerable people in the community) when determining whether to take regulatory action about a health practitioner. It also authorises limited sharing of information with employers and state/territory health departments about serious matters involving the conduct of a registered health practitioner.

As the national regulators, it is Ahpra and the National Boards' responsibility to protect the public and prevent harm. However, most health practitioners practise safely and well. In 2018/19 around 98% of all registered practitioners did not have any concerns reported about their conduct, health or performance.

The second policy direction requires National Boards to consult with patient safety bodies and consumer bodies on registration standards, codes and guidelines when these are being developed or revised. It also provides that National Boards and Ahpra must:

- consider the impacts of the new or revised registration standard on vulnerable members of the community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and
- prepare and publish a 'patient health and safety impact statement' with each new or revised registration standard, code or guideline.

In implementing these policy directions, Ahpra and National Boards will continue to ensure fairness for health practitioners in regulatory processes. The policy directions can be viewed on the [Ahpra and National Board websites](#).

### 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](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to receive up to date information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



### Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information and resources about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on their website at [www.osteopathyboard.gov.au](http://www.osteopathyboard.gov.au). Osteopaths are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting their profession.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). Alternatively, contact Ahpra by an online enquiry form or phone 1300 419 495.

### Dr Nikole Grbin (Osteopath)

Chair  
Osteopathy Board of Australia  
6 March 2020