

Communiqué

June and July 2021 meetings of the Dental Board of Australia

The Dental Board of Australia (the Board) held its 130th and 131st meetings on Friday 25 June and Friday 30 July respectively. The Board and its committees continue to meet via video conferencing since March 2020.

This communiqué highlights the key discussions and considerations covered during the Board meetings and other relevant information. We publish this communiqué on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. We encourage you to distribute it to colleagues and interested parties, including within your work or organisation.

Expressions of interest for the Conscious sedation advisory panel

The Board's Conscious sedation advisory panel was established to provide the Board with advice and make recommendations to the Board on matters relating to endorsement in the area of conscious sedation. With member terms due to expire, the Board agreed to undertake an Expression of Interest (EoI) process to appoint members to the Panel for a coming term. Appointments are due to be finalised in August/September.

Public consultation - review of Guidelines on infection control

Following the outcomes of preliminary consultation on the review of the Guidelines on Infection Control, the Board agreed to the release of the public consultation paper.

Part of the Board's role, as outlined in the National Law, is to set registration standards for dental practitioners, and to develop codes and regulatory guidelines for the profession. The Board first published the Guidelines on infection control in 2010 to set out the obligations of dental practitioners for maintaining good infection prevention and control. These are now due for scheduled review to ensure continued relevance in a dynamic regulatory environment.

As set out in the National Law under section 39, regulatory guidelines are by their very nature prescriptive documents as they can be used as evidence in legal proceedings. They must conform with legal requirements and are not easily amended – they can take a long time to review and update. As a result, it can be challenging to respond to changing contexts, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the Board does not issue guidelines (under section 39) about specific areas of clinical practice.

The Board is proposing to replace the guidelines with resources to help practitioners comply with their obligations and promote and support practitioners to practise professionally. This would mean that the Board can be more responsive and update material more quickly reducing unnecessary regulatory burden.

Fact sheet on the use of teeth whitening products by dental practitioners

The Board approved the release of an updated fact sheet on teeth whitening for dental practitioners.

The purpose of the fact sheet is to give dental practitioners an overview of the laws and professional obligations that apply when they use teeth whitening products as part of their practice. The fact sheet provides links to useful information, such as medicines and poisons legislation.

The main change to the fact sheet is that it now confirms practitioners can provide higher concentration take-home teeth whitening products to patients, if after applying professional judgement, they determine it is safe to do so. This reflects the withdrawal of the previous Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) product safety bulletin that stated high concentration teeth whitening products could only be used in-clinic.

The fact sheet was updated in consultation with our stakeholders, including the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the ACCC. The fact sheet uses the Board's new plain English formatting style, which the Board intends applying to its other fact sheets.

The Board hopes that the updated fact sheet now clarifies any confusion around practitioners being able to provide teeth whitening products to patients for use at home, under practitioner instruction.

Dental Practitioner Support service

Support for dental practitioners who need someone to talk to is just a quick phone call or click away.

Dental Practitioner Support is a national 24/7 health and wellbeing support service for all dental practitioners. Anyone using it does not have to give their name and can seek support anonymously.

The service offers health and wellbeing support to all dental practitioners, including dentists, dental prosthetists, oral health therapists, dental hygienists and dental therapists. It is also available to dental students, educators, employers, Australian Dental Council exam candidates and concerned family members and friends.

While funded by the Board, the service is run independently by [Turning Point](#), a leading addiction treatment, research and education organisation based in Victoria. This means practitioners can have complete confidence in reaching out for confidential support.

Access Dental Practitioner Support:

- 1800 377 700
- dpsupport.org.au

We ask all our stakeholders to continue to promote the service widely.

Are your contact details up to date?

Your contact details must be 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](#). Your email settings may need to be changed to receive emails from Ahpra or the Board and to avoid misdirection to junk mail.

Conclusion

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.dentalboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au. More information on the Board's work is also available in the Board's regular newsletter. Read the latest edition, [March 2021](#).

For more information about or help with regulatory issues, please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact Ahpra on 1300 419 495.

Dr Murray Thomas

Chair, Dental Board of Australia

May 2021