

Communiqué

19 December 2018

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) meets each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function under the National Law¹ and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in its content.

Compliments of the season

On behalf of the Pharmacy Board of Australia, I extend best wishes and compliments of the season to all pharmacists and our stakeholders.

A year in review

With the end of the year approaching, it is a good opportunity to reflect on our achievements and to look at what lies ahead.

During 2018, the Board underwent considerable change with seven new members appointed in October to replace departing members, many of whom were appointed to the inaugural Board in September 2009. The Board's work primarily focuses on protecting the public which involves decisions about individual pharmacists but it is also about policy that impacts the public.

During the past year, the Board has carried out significant work including:

- inducting new Board members
- extending our partnership with the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) to deliver the accreditation function for pharmacy in the National Scheme, and collaborating on the development of an intern year assessment blueprint
- conducting a survey of interns and preceptors to investigate the internship experience
- commissioning competency mapping to inform the development of a discussion paper on possible prescribing by pharmacists and hosting the Pharmacy Prescribing Forum, attended by a broad range of stakeholders, and
- engaging with stakeholders including pharmacy member organisations, state and territory health departments and regulators about matters of mutual interest and to provide further information about the role of the Board in public protection.

During the year ahead, the Board's work will include:

- planning its review of registration standards and guidelines for pharmacists, which will draw upon the outcomes of work such as the intern and preceptor survey and other research
- investigating options for future intern assessment, and

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

- publishing a discussion paper on proposals about pharmacist prescribing that could be implemented and sustained as part of a broader range of health services to effectively meet the health needs of the community.

An annual report summary outlining the Board's work over the 12 months to 30 June 2018 will be published in the new year.

Registration renewal reminder

A reminder to pharmacists who did not renew their registration by 30 November 2018 that they are now in the late renewal period and have until 31 December to apply. Applications received in December will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee. Practitioners who apply after 1 January must lodge a new application for registration.

Anyone who does not apply to renew their registration by 31 December 2018 will have lapsed registration. They will be removed from the [national online register](#) and they will not be able to practise in Australia. A 'fast-track' application can be made, but only in January 2019 and the pharmacist cannot practise until it is processed and the national register is updated, which can take time.

Pharmacists who apply to renew during the late renewal period can still practise even if:

- we are still processing their application to renew, and/or
- the registration expiry date displayed on the register has passed.

Do you practise under the name published on the online Register of practitioners?

Governments recently consulted on possible changes to the National Law, which would allow the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards to publish on the national online register of practitioners the names that registered health practitioners use in practice and not just their legal name.

The national online register of practitioners is a vital part of Australia's system of regulating pharmacists to support patient safety. Each registered health profession publishes registration information about practitioners on the online register. The public and employers can look up the names of all health practitioners who are registered to practise. The register also provides important information about limits or restrictions placed on the way a registered health practitioner is allowed to practise.

The national online register must remain an authoritative and trusted source of information about health practitioners. Consumers rely on it for accurate and up-to-date information to inform their healthcare decision-making and employers rely on it to validate their employees' registration status.

AHPRA and the Board know that some pharmacists may be practising using a name that is different from their legally recognised name published on the register (an alias).

AHPRA has asked governments to consider changes to the National Law that would enable registered health practitioners to nominate one or more aliases to be recorded on the public register. Governments [recently consulted](#) on this, among a range of other possible amendments to the National Law.

AHPRA believes that recording additional names (or aliases) on the register will help to inform and protect the public, by making it easier to identify a practitioner who may be registered and able to practise but who is not using their legal name.

There are some operational and practical issues that will need to be considered if governments make this change. A clear definition of an 'alias' is required, so practitioners' reporting obligations to AHPRA and the Board are clear.

AHPRA and National Boards will need to consider what information practitioners will need to provide about their use of aliases in practice and whether any verification of this will be necessary to protect the validity of the register. Finally, there may be risks of unintended consequences, including whether publishing aliases could be used for commercial gain or benefits that are not related to public information and protection, which is the focus of the National Law.

AHPRA and the Board will keep practitioners and the public informed of any changes to the law and reporting requirements.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for pharmacists on its website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au. For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Scheme also refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

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



Brett Simmonds
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
19 December 2018

[The Pharmacy Board of Australia](#) is the regulator of pharmacists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent pharmacists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for pharmacists and managing notifications (complaints) about pharmacists and pharmacy students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's pharmacists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and Qld which have co-regulatory arrangements.*