

## Communiqué

---

**12 September 2019**

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 Law<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **Vietnamese delegation visits Sydney**

I had the pleasure of meeting with a delegation from Vietnam led by Vice Minister of Health, Dr Truong Quoc Cuong, in Sydney on 31 July 2019. Supporting safe pharmacist practice through regulation was the theme of the meeting.

The vice minister and Vietnamese delegation were in Australia to learn more about the regulation of medicines, clinical pharmacy practice in community and hospital pharmacy settings and the pharmacy profession. During the meeting, presentations were given by myself and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) staff on the regulatory arrangements in Australia, with a particular focus on the regulatory standards for pharmacists and requirements to maintain competence to practice.

Australian participants also learnt of the challenges for regulation in Vietnam, particularly as pharmacy is a relatively young profession in that country.

AHPRA and National Boards within the National Scheme regularly receive requests from international regulatory partners for opportunities to learn more about the Australian system of regulation. AHPRA's World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for health workforce regulation promotes shared learning and cooperation to promote best practice in practitioner regulation.

### **Getting ready for graduate and intern registration period**

The Board and AHPRA met with stakeholders in Canberra recently to share with them preparations in the lead up to the 2019-20 registration period for graduates and interns applying for provisional or general registration. Some of what we outlined was our work to:

- simplify the application process
- streamline the assessment process to ensure straightforward applications are fast tracked
- improve our communication with applicants about their applications as well as contact details of the staff member managing their application, and
- track our progress to assign the necessary resources to achieve timely registration.

---

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

The Board and AHPRA will continue to collaborate on arrangements to streamline our processes for registration and ensure that they are successfully implemented in time for the next graduate and intern registration periods due to start in October 2019.

More information about the graduate application process is published under [Graduate applications](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **Important consultations now open – feedback invited**

Two public consultations are now open asking for people to have their say on revised guidance to help practitioners and others understand their mandatory notification obligations and understand their obligations when advertising a regulated health service.

The Board is conducting the consultations alongside other National Boards and AHPRA on:

- revised *Guidelines: Mandatory notifications about registered health practitioners and Guidelines: Mandatory notifications about health students*, and
- revised *Guidelines on advertising regulated health services*.

The Board invites pharmacists and its stakeholders to provide feedback to these important public consultations. To ensure everyone has the chance to respond the closing dates for public consultation have been staggered as follows:

- Public consultation on the mandatory notifications guidelines will close on 6 November 2019.
- Public consultation on the advertising guidelines will close on 26 November 2019.

The consultation papers are available on the [Consultations page](#) of the Board's website.

### **New practitioner experience video launched**

Keep perspective; and seek help. That's the message in the [latest video](#) released by AHPRA and the National Boards as part of the '[Let's talk about it](#)' series – *Putting it in perspective: A practitioner's notifications experience*.

The video is the second practitioner experience video published this year, providing a health practitioner's first-hand account of the notification process.

The video series aims to share practitioners' experiences, recognising what are common reactions, while proactively encouraging them to focus on likely outcomes and seek support.

Many practitioners have told us that they would have benefited greatly from hearing the voice of others who had gone through the notifications experience — and come out the other side.

We understand that many practitioners who are subject to a notification may fear losing their registration. However, many notifications end without the need for regulatory action and are often closed following initial assessment, without the need for an extended investigation.

Read the full [media release](#).

### **Quarterly registration data**

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's pharmacy workforce.

At June 2019, there were a total of 31,955 registered pharmacists comprising the following number of registrants according to registration type:

- 29,034 – general registration
- 1,789 – provisional registration

- 16 – limited registration, and
- 1,116 – non-practising registration.

The quarterly registration data at March 2019 for the pharmacy profession are published on the Board's website under [About>Statistics](#). The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns that may be of interest to the pharmacy profession.

### Cultural safety training provider announced

PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting Pty Limited (PwC's Indigenous Consulting) in partnership with Griffith University First Peoples Health Unit will deliver cultural safety training to Board and committee members as well as AHPRA staff. This appointment is the outcome of a competitive tender process.

Cultural safety training is an important first step to ensure that AHPRA and the Boards are working to help health practitioners nationally understand their own connection to culture and unconscious biases, and how these are likely to influence their work. This training is part of AHPRA's commitment to support health equity for all Australians, which was publicly made by AHPRA and 36 other signatories in the National Scheme's [Statement of intent](#) last year.

One of AHPRA's strategic priorities is helping to embed cultural safety into the health system through its work with over 740,000 registered health practitioners across Australia.

National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group member and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia Chair, Ms Renee Owen, said everyone had a part to play to achieve health equity.

'We all have a responsibility to understand cultural safety so that we can work to eliminate racism from the health system and enable health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This training is an important step towards ensuring that the regulation of health practitioners is culturally safe,' Ms Owen said.

This unique Aboriginal-led collaboration between PwC's Indigenous Consulting, Griffith University's First Peoples Health Unit and the [National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy Group](#) will provide a world class, bespoke cultural safety training program supporting the necessary culture transformation of Australia's health professions.

The training will be rolled out from the end of 2019.

### Getting to know your colleague – information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice profession

Members of the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board \(ATSIHPBA\)](#) recently gave a update to the Pharmacy Board at its August meeting about the Board, the profession and its practitioners.

The [ATSIHPBA](#) want to help the pharmacy profession understand the value that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners can bring to Australian healthcare to make it culturally safe and help close the gap. Below are some simple facts about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners and their profession to help pharmacists know more.

The ATSIHPBA would like to continue to work with AHPRA and the pharmacy profession to help spread the word about the culturally safe workforce which is qualified, competent, registered and ready to go to work in both clinical and non-clinical roles.

There are some things that pharmacists can do to help:

- **Ask a question:** Ask your health service, employer or other team members, 'how many Aboriginal Health Practitioners do we employ?' or 'Did you know we could make our

practice more culturally safe by employing an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner, and do our bit towards closing the gap?’

- **Make them a priority:** Prioritise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workforce agenda.
- **Share the message:** Distribute the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice [profession brochures](#) explaining their role to employers.

Engaging the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce to work in partnership with pharmacy is a key opportunity to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

If you would like to find out more about the profession please contact Executive Officer, Jill Humphreys at [jill.humphreys@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:jill.humphreys@ahpra.gov.au) or on (03) 8708 9066.

### Advertising your regulated health service

To protect consumers, the [National Law](#) includes provisions about advertising regulated health services. The Board has recently included a list of resources on its [website](#) that you might find helpful for understanding and meeting your advertising obligations.

Advertising is actions by people or businesses to draw attention to their services. The ways people and businesses can promote services are almost limitless and include all forms of printed and electronic media.

If you are advertising a regulated health service, your advertising must not:

- **be false, misleading or deceptive**, or likely to be misleading or deceptive
- **offer a gift, discount or other inducement**, unless the terms and conditions of the offer are also stated
- **use testimonials or purported testimonials** about the service or business
- **create an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment**, or
- directly or indirectly **encourage the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services**.

If you're not sure you're meeting your obligations, or if you've been contacted by AHPRA about your advertising, there are [steps you can follow](#) to make sure you comply with your professional and legal obligations.

For further information see the [advertising resources](#) section on the AHPRA website.

### Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for pharmacists on its website at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://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](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Brett Simmonds  
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia  
12 September 2019

*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.*