



## Communiqué

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August 2017

The Podiatry Board of Australia (the Board) meets each month to consider and decide on matters related to its regulatory functions under the National Law<sup>1</sup> and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué highlights any key matters from the Board's meeting as well as other important information.

The Board held its August 2017 meeting by teleconference.

### Upcoming Breakfast Forum in Hobart

As part of our communication and engagement strategy, the Board is holding a breakfast forum for registrants on Thursday 28 September 2017 in Hobart. Podiatrists and podiatric surgeons whose principal place of practice is in Tasmania have been emailed an invitation to the forum. All podiatrists and podiatric surgeons are welcome to attend even if your principal place of practice is in a different state or territory.

The forum is being held at the AHPRA office, Level 5, 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart from 7.30 to 8.30am. A light breakfast will be served.

The forum is a great opportunity for local podiatrists and podiatric surgeons and members of the Board to meet informally and discuss current issues in podiatry practice.

Members of the Board will present on the following topic, which will be followed by an open discussion with members of the profession:

*Themes identified through an analysis of complaints or concerns (called 'notifications' in the National Law) received by the Board about podiatrists and podiatric surgeons between July 2010 and June 2014.*

If you haven't already done so, you can register your interest in attending the forum by email at [forum@podiatryboard.gov.au](mailto:forum@podiatryboard.gov.au).

### Accreditation and approval of programs of study for the podiatry profession

One of the objectives of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners. The National Law sets out the respective roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority, the Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council (ANZPAC), in relation to the accreditation and approval of education providers and programs of study for the podiatry profession.

#### **Southern Cross University**

After considering a report from ANZPAC about its accreditation of the Bachelor of Podiatry (Pass & Honours) programs of study offered by Southern Cross University at its Gold Coast campus, the Board approved the programs until 7 August 2022 as providing a qualification for the purpose of general registration as a podiatrist and a qualification in podiatric therapeutics for the purpose of endorsement for scheduled medicines.

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

## Meeting with Podiatrists Board of New Zealand

The Board's Strategic Planning and Policy Committee had a meeting with the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand in Wellington on 25 August 2017. The two boards entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2011, with a view to maintaining an ongoing collaborative relationship, in the spirit of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA), which will serve to better protect the public. The two boards try to meet annually to exchange information about common issues about the regulation of the podiatry profession in Australia and New Zealand.

## The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's podiatry workforce

The data for the April to June 2017 quarter was recently published on the Board's website under [About>Statistics](#). The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns.

At 30 June 2017, there were a total of 4,925 registered podiatrists and podiatric surgeons. Of these 4,790 held general registration; 30 held both general and specialist registration; 82 had their registration endorsed for scheduled medicines; and 105 held non-practising registration.

## National Boards approve policy for removing reprimands from the national register

A policy to ensure consistent removal of reprimands from the national register of practitioners has been approved by all National Boards.

Reprimands on a practitioner's registration can be imposed under the National Law by a performance or professional standards panel, professional standards committee (New South Wales), and a relevant tribunal or court.

The policy will ensure that reprimands are removed from the [national register](#) in a consistent and effective way. It also allows for the removal of reprimands imposed under previous legislation to be considered on an individual basis, consistent with removal powers under that legislation.

A reprimand imposed under the National Law will be removed from the national register on the publication end date set by the relevant panel, committee, court or tribunal. Where a panel or tribunal has not set a publication end date, or where the reprimand was imposed under previous legislation, the reprimand will be removed no earlier than five years from the date of initial publication.

This is subject to:

- the practitioner making an application for removal of the reprimand
- no relevant event having occurred in the five-year period of publication of the reprimand,
- and legal advice confirming the power to remove a reprimand imposed under previous legislation.

A relevant event is any health, performance or conduct notification, action taken against the practitioner in relation to an adverse disclosure on renewal of registration, new information returned on a criminal history check or a confirmed breach of restrictions. It also includes when action has been taken against a practitioner regarding their conduct, health or performance. New notifications, irrespective of whether action was taken, will also be taken into account if an application for removal of a reprimand is received after the five-year period of publication.

The policy will take effect from 2 October 2017 and will be reviewed annually. An application form for removal of a reprimand from the national register will be published under [Common forms](#) on the AHPRA website.

## COAG Health Council meeting communiqué: progressing amendments to the National Law

The federal and state and territory health ministers met in Brisbane on 4 August 2017 at the [COAG Health Council](#) to discuss a range of national health issues. The meeting was chaired by the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon. Jill Hennessy. AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher attended the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council) meeting which brings together all health ministers throughout Australia to provide oversight for the work of the National Scheme. AHPRA and the National Boards provide a regular update to the Ministerial Council on our work.

The meeting included an agreement by health ministers to proceed with amendments to the National Law, to strengthen penalties for offences committed by people who hold themselves out to be a registered

health practitioner, including those who use reserved professional titles or carry out restricted practices when not registered. Ministers also agreed to proceed with an amendment to introduce a custodial sentence with a maximum term of up to three years for these offences. These important reforms will be fast tracked to strengthen public protection under the National Law. Preparation will now begin on a draft amendment bill, with a view to being introduced to the Queensland Parliament in 2018.

Ministers also discussed mandatory reporting provisions for treating health practitioners, agreeing that protecting the public from harm is of paramount importance as is supporting practitioners to seek help and treatment for their health concerns, including for their mental health and wellbeing. It was agreed that the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council will recommend a nationally consistent approach to mandatory reporting exemptions for treating practitioners following a consultation process with consumer and practitioner groups. A proposal on mandatory reporting is expected to be considered at the November 2017 meeting of the COAG Health Council.

The Council produces a [communiqué](#) from its meeting which can be accessed on AHPRA's website.

### Are your contact details up-to-date?

It is important your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from AHPRA and information from the Board. You can check or update your contact information by logging in to the [online services portal](#) on 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.



### Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for podiatrists and podiatric surgeons on its [website](#) and practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting the podiatry 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.

Cathy Loughry  
Chair  
**Podiatry Board of Australia**  
7 September 2017