



Communiqué

December 2018

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

This communiqué highlights any key matters from the Board's December 2018 meeting, as well as other important information.

The Board held its December 2018 meeting in Melbourne.

Accreditation arrangements for the podiatry profession

Following a scheduled review of accreditation arrangements that was undertaken across all National Boards, the Board decided in July 2018 that the accreditation functions for the podiatry profession will be exercised by an independent accreditation committee established by the Board for a five-year period from 1 July 2019.

The Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) acknowledge the work of the Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council (ANZPAC) in undertaking the accreditation functions for the podiatry profession under the National Law since July 2010. The Board appreciates the contribution of the ANZPAC Board and Committees, and other individuals working with ANZPAC to the National Scheme and thanks them for their role in ensuring high quality education and training of podiatrists and podiatric surgeons in Australia.

ANZPAC will continue to accredit and monitor podiatry and podiatric surgery education programs and assess overseas qualified podiatrists until 30 June 2019. The Board, ANZPAC and AHPRA are working together to ensure a smooth transition of this work to the Podiatry Accreditation Committee on 1 July 2019.

Call for applications for appointment to the Podiatry Accreditation Committee

The Board is calling for applications for appointment to the Podiatry Accreditation Committee (the Committee).

The role of the Committee is to exercise accreditation functions under the National Law including:

1. developing and reviewing accreditation standards
2. assessing and accrediting programs of study
3. monitoring approved programs of study and education providers to ensure they continue to meet accreditation standards
4. advising the Board on issues in education and clinical training which may impact on podiatry and podiatric surgery practice and approved podiatry and podiatric surgery programs, and
5. considering other matters as requested by the Board.

The Board is seeking applications from suitably qualified and experienced registered health practitioners, educationalists and accreditation experts.

Information about the role, eligibility requirements and the application process can be found [here](#).

Applications close **8 February 2019** at 5:00pm Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (AEDT).

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

Fast Track applications

Practitioners whose registration lapsed on 1 January 2019 and who wish to keep practising must make a new application for registration. In some cases, practitioners can use the fast track application for this process. The fast track process is only available for one month after a practitioner's registration has lapsed.

A fast track application fee is payable in addition to a registration fee. Practitioners cannot practise until their application is approved and their registration details are updated on the national register of practitioners.

A fast track application form for general registration as a podiatrist or specialist registration as a podiatric surgeon is available on the [Forms](#) page of the Board's website.

Newsletter from the Board

The Board has released its latest newsletter in late November. Read it on the [Newsletters page](#).

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 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 podiatrists and podiatric surgeons 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 them to validate their employees' registration status.

We know that some practitioners practise their profession 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.

We 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.

We will keep you informed of any changes to the law and reporting requirements.

Paramedics: Welcome to the National Scheme!

On Saturday 1 December 2018 the National Scheme reached a milestone with paramedicine becoming the sixteenth regulated health profession.

Reflecting on the milestone, Paramedicine Board of Australia Chair Associate Professor Stephen Gough ASM Gough noted that it was the culmination of many years of debate, deliberation and sustained effort by the paramedic profession to join a national regulatory scheme that has patient safety at its heart.

‘While paramedics have always had the patient at the centre of everything they do – showing compassion, understanding and empathy to those they provide care – the past two decades have also seen the profession grow in complexity; paramedics are now working in a range of roles and environments, using sophisticated treatments and technology, to provide world-class services to Australian communities.

‘Regulating paramedicine under the National Scheme acknowledges the critical role paramedics play in our health system and recognises paramedics as registered health professionals,’ Associate Professor Gough said.

1 December 2018 also marks just over two years since the [COAG Health Council](#) announced its intention to regulate the paramedicine profession, with the inaugural National Board appointed in October 2017.

Over this time, stakeholders across the profession, including governments, jurisdictional ambulance services, and private and volunteer organisations, have worked together to make sure that all eligible paramedics are well prepared for regulation.

Since registration opened at the beginning of September 2018, over 17,000 paramedics have applied for registration.

Find out more about paramedicine on the [Paramedicine Board of Australia’s website](#).

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. Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495.

Follow AHPRA on social media

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Cylie Williams
Chair
Podiatry Board of Australia
9 January 2019