



Communiqué

June 2019

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 (National Scheme).

This communiqué highlights any key matters from the Board's 28 June 2019 meeting, as well as other important information.

The Board held its 28 June 2019 meeting in Brisbane.

To coincide with the meeting, the Board met with local stakeholders, which provided an opportunity to discuss the work of the Board and local podiatry practice.

The membership of the new Podiatry Accreditation Committee has been announced

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.

After a competitive expression of interest and selection process, the Board appointed the following members to the Podiatry Accreditation Committee (the Committee):

- Dr Meeuwis Boelen (Chair)
- Mr Mark Gilheany (Deputy Chair)
- Ms Alison Bell
- Dr Alan Bryant
- Dr Vivienne Chuter
- Dr Sara Jones
- Dr Lloyd Reed

More information about the Committee can be found on the Board's [website](#).

National Scheme news

New video gives a practitioner's experience of a notification

AHPRA and the Board know that making or being the subject of a notification can be confusing and stressful. We are working to support health consumers and practitioners by improving the way we communicate about notifications.

As part of this work, AHPRA and National Boards released the latest video in our '[Let's talk about it](#)' series. It tells one practitioner's experience of the process, aiming to help other practitioners who have a notification made about them.

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

AHPRA has gathered feedback from notifiers and practitioners on their experience of the notifications process. After over 80 interviews and more than 5,000 survey responses, a small number of consistent themes have emerged. These themes are informing the content of our video series.

This latest video, *A notification was made about me: A practitioner's experience*, is a powerful first-hand account of a practitioner's experience engaging with AHPRA and a National Board. It contains clear messages for other health practitioners about seeking support early in the notification process.

Registered health practitioners and their support networks will be encouraged to use this new resource when they are involved in the notifications process.

Practitioners can view the video on the [AHPRA website](#), where they can find additional information on understanding the notifications experience, and on [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo channels](#).

Read the full media release on the [AHPRA website](#).

Company fined \$30,600 for unlawful advertising

A Sydney company has been convicted of 10 charges related to advertising offences in a New South Wales local court following charges laid by AHPRA.

The Running Clinic (Australia) Pty Ltd (formerly trading as the Heel Clinic), was convicted and fined for advertising offences under the National Law. It was fined \$30,600 and ordered to pay AHPRA's costs of \$8,000.

AHPRA filed 10 charges against the company. It alleged that advertising claims on The Running Clinic's websites and Facebook account contained false, misleading and deceptive claims about podiatry services that were likely to create an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment.

AHPRA first raised the unlawful advertising with the company in 2015 and, while minor changes were made, it failed to significantly rectify the issues.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher welcomed the court outcome. 'Consumers have a right to expect that all registered health practitioners are truthful when advertising their services. This court outcome sends a clear message to anyone advertising a regulated health service that AHPRA will act if they break the law.'

The Board Chair Cylie Williams said 'ensuring public safety and trust in services provided by podiatrists in Australia is at the heart of what we do. Our advertising guidelines are designed to help practitioners to do the right thing when advertising their services.'

The Board's guidelines for advertising regulated health services can be found on the Board's [website](#).

Information and resources to help practitioners understand their advertising obligations are available on the [advertising resources](#) page of the AHPRA website.

Practitioners' responsibility to support public health programs

Australia's health regulators have reminded health practitioners about their responsibility to support public health programs, including vaccination.

Regulators have spoken out to support public safety, given mounting concerns about a five-year high in measles cases and an early spike in flu cases this year.

AHPRA and the National Boards for 16 professions have urged more than 740,000 registered health practitioners to take seriously their responsibilities for public health, including by helping patients to be protected from preventable illnesses.

You can read the [media release](#) on the Board's website.

AHPRA launches WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation

In April, AHPRA officially launched as a designated World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation in the Western Pacific Region.

AHPRA, working in partnership with the National Boards, joins a list of over 800 institutions in more than 80 countries supporting WHO programs in areas such as nursing development, communicable diseases, mental health, chronic diseases and health technologies.

Strengthening the regulation of the health workforce is an important part of the WHO's global strategy to build the human resources needed for access to safe and quality healthcare across the world.

As a designated WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation, AHPRA and National Boards are excited by the opportunity to share expertise and promote dialogue that collectively improves the standard of regulatory practice within the WHO Western Pacific Region. The global health workforce crosses country borders and is mobile, including in Australia where thousands of overseas-qualified practitioners are registered and take up practice here. It's important that regulators from different countries work together to set the standards for practitioner education, competence and conduct necessary for the global health workforce to deliver safe and reliable healthcare.

As a WHO collaborating centre AHPRA will:

- help the WHO in providing technical support to strengthen health workforce regulatory systems in member states
- support the WHO in promoting the adoption of contemporary regulatory approaches to health workforce regulation, and
- strengthen the capacity, skills and knowledge of regulators in member states under the WHO's guidance.

Information Publications Scheme – promoting accessibility of our information

AHPRA and National Boards are now required to comply with the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) established under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth). The IPS promotes openness and transparency and aims to reduce the number of Freedom of Information applications through the proactive publication of information. This requires that certain information and documents be made publicly available.

AHPRA and National Boards have worked together to implement the IPS and information has been recently published about it on the [AHPRA 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 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

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



A/Prof Cylie Williams
Chair
Podiatry Board of Australia
09 July 2019