



Communiqué

22 September 2017

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law), as in force in each state and territory. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

This communiqué highlights key issues from the 89th meeting of the Board on 22 September 2017.

Extension of exemption for higher degree supervisors until 31 December 2018

The Board is extending its exemption from the Area of Practice Endorsement requirement for higher degree supervisors who became Board-approved supervisors before 1 July 2013.

The Board's *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers* require higher degree placement supervisors to have held endorsement in their relevant area of practice for at least two years. Supervisors who became Board-approved supervisors before the current guidelines started on 1 July 2013 have not needed to meet the endorsement requirement until they apply to maintain supervisor status.

The Board has decided to extend this exemption until **31 December 2018**, while it consults on and implements revised supervisor guidelines. In light of the exemption, the Board has updated its website with the relevant [frequently asked question](#).

This exemption only applies to Board-approved supervisors approved by the Board for the higher degree supervisor category on or before 1 July 2013. These supervisors still need to complete refresher training and apply to AHPRA to maintain supervisor status before 31 June 2018 (using the [MBAS-76 form](#)), but they will not need to provide evidence of meeting the endorsement requirement to continue to be approved as a higher degree supervisor until 31 December 2018. Those approved as higher degree supervisors on 1 July 2013 who have already submitted their MBAS form and did not apply for (or were not granted) the higher degree category can apply to add the category through a written request to AHPRA using the [online web enquiry](#).

In accordance with psychologists' obligation to practice within scope of competence, higher degree supervisors are still expected to have the relevant knowledge and experience to provide suitable supervision to students in a pathway to an Area of Practice Endorsement. The Board also expects education providers are meeting the supervision requirements set out in the accreditation standards.

The Board is planning to start public consultation on revised supervisor guidelines in early 2018. The Board considers it appropriate to maintain the status-quo while these issues are under review.

Accreditation Systems Review

The draft report, which outlines recommendations from the [Accreditation Systems Review](#), was released on 4 September and was considered by the Board this month.

The purpose of the Accreditation Systems Review is to build upon the information collated through the NRAS Review and provide advice to the Ministerial Council on the governance, structure, and cost-effectiveness of accreditation systems in the National Scheme.

The Board intends to provide feedback on the draft report. The final report is scheduled to be released in late October.

2017/18 fees

The Board has announced the national registration fee for psychologists for 2017/18. The Board has set the registration fee at \$462. The fee for practitioners whose principal place of practice is in New South Wales is \$381 (NSW is a [co-regulatory jurisdiction](#)).

A [full fee schedule](#), including the fee arrangements for practitioners whose principal place of practice is NSW, is published on the Board's website.

Practitioners' registration fees fund the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The decision to increase the fee by indexation ensures practitioners are not unduly burdened, but still provides sufficient income to allow the Board to carry out its duties and protect the public.

Fees support the Board in the continual development of a safe and mobile Australian workforce for health practitioners and the public in the most efficient ways possible. It also allows the Board to facilitate the provision of high-quality education and training for practitioners.

Public consultation on reviewing the National Psychology Examination Curriculum

The public consultation phase for *Consultation Paper 28: National Psychology Examination Curriculum Review* closed on 1 September 2017.

There were six submissions, with three submissions meeting the criteria for publication on the Board's website. These are available for review at [Past Consultations](#).

The National Board is now working on finalising the curriculum documents for publication (including the reading list, curriculum, exam guidelines and orientation guide) and the transition period.

National Scheme news

Legislative changes passed to establish a new National Board for paramedicine and provide stronger protection for the public

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* has been passed by the Queensland Parliament and has received royal assent. This Bill contains amendments to the National Law that will apply in all states and territories except Western Australia (South Australia also needs to make a regulation to give effect to the amendments). The Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia has also passed a corresponding amendment Bill (the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Amendment Bill 2017*) which will now be considered by the Legislative Council.

The passing of the Bill in Queensland marks a significant day for health practitioner regulation as these are the first legislative amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) since the start of the National Scheme in 2010. The changes to the National Law will enable the Paramedicine Board of Australia to be established with the appointment of inaugural board members by Health Ministers in the near future. Also, new measures that strengthen public protection will be introduced and there will be formal recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

To find out what the amendments include read the [news item](#) on the AHPRA website.

Decisions about proposed amendments to the National Law are made by health ministers and the governments of all states and territories, with the changes progressed through the Queensland Parliament (as the host jurisdiction of the National Law), and the Western Australian Parliament. AHPRA will work with National Boards, governments, health departments, professions and consumer representatives to support the implementation of the changes to the National Law into daily operations.

While the Queensland Bill has received royal assent, commencement of many of the changes to the National Law are likely to occur in a staggered process over the coming months.

The Health Practitioner Regulation and National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017 as passed by the Queensland Parliament can be accessed the [Queensland parliament website](#).

More information on the regulation of paramedics under the National Scheme can be accessed 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 well-being. They agreed practitioners should be able to confidentially seek treatment for health issues while preserving the requirement for patient safety. It was agreed that the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council will recommend a nationally consistent approach to mandatory reporting 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 the [AHPRA website](#).

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for psychologists on its website at <http://www.psychologyboard.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.

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Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
6 October 2017