

## Communiqué

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August 2021

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 and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Since March 2021, the Board has held all of its meetings by video conference.

### **Approval of new professional capabilities for podiatrists and podiatric surgeons**

At its July 2021 meeting, the Board approved new professional capabilities for podiatrists and podiatric surgeons. They will come into effect 1 January 2022.

The professional capabilities identify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to safely and competently practise as a podiatrist or podiatric surgeon in Australia. They describe the threshold or minimum level of professional capability needed for registration as a podiatrist or podiatric surgeon.

The Podiatry Accreditation Committee developed the new professional capabilities for the Board, which included consulting widely with the profession and other stakeholders.

The new professional capabilities reflect contemporary podiatry and podiatric surgery practice in Australia. They are founded on person-centred, evidenced-based practice, and make cultural safety a key component of safe care, particularly with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The professional capabilities will be used by the Board as a reference point for threshold capability when exercising its statutory functions.

Professional capabilities are also used for a range of other purposes, including accreditation of programs of study, and to communicate to the public, patients, employers, insurance companies and other stakeholders the standards they can expect from podiatrists and podiatric surgeons.

Podiatrists and podiatric surgeons may use the professional capabilities when planning their professional development activities. They can use the professional capabilities to reflect on their practice; identify any areas where their knowledge and skills may not meet the minimum level of capability and develop and implement their continuing professional development learning plan that addresses the gaps in their knowledge and skills.

The new professional capabilities will be published on the Board's website in early September 2021, together with supporting information such as FAQs.

### **Approval of new and revised accreditation standards for podiatry**

At its July 2021 meeting, the Board approved new accreditation standards for the podiatry profession which will come into effect on 1 January 2022.

The new accreditation standards describe the requirements that education providers must meet to ensure their graduates have the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to safely and competently practice as podiatrists or podiatric surgeons in Australia.

There are four new accreditation standards, including new standards for entry-level podiatry programs and podiatric surgery programs as well as standards for the accreditation of education programs leading to endorsement of registration for scheduled medicines.

The Podiatry Accreditation Committee developed the new accreditation standards. This involved wide-ranging consultation with the profession and other stakeholders.

The new accreditation standards will be published on the Board's website in early September 2021.

### **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 accreditation function is the primary way of achieving this.

The National Law sets out the respective roles of the Board and its accreditation authority, the Podiatry Accreditation Committee (the Committee), in relation to the accreditation and approval of education providers and programs of study for the podiatry profession.

### **La Trobe University Podiatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics program**

At the May meeting, after considering a report from the Committee about its accreditation of the Podiatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics non-award program of study delivered online by La Trobe University from its Bundoora campus, the Board approved the accredited program as providing a qualification in podiatric therapeutics for the purpose of endorsement for scheduled medicines under Pathway B of the Board's registration standard for endorsement for scheduled medicines.

### **No place for sexism, sexual harassment or gendered violence in healthcare**

Ahpra and the National Boards released a joint statement reminding practitioners that there is no place for sexism, sexual harassment or gendered violence in healthcare.

The statement reinforces the important role registered practitioners have in building and maintaining a culture of respect in healthcare. Ahpra and the National Boards encourage speaking up about disrespectful behaviour and unprofessional conduct to support a safer healthcare system for everyone.

The joint statement, [No place for sexism, sexual harassment or violence in healthcare](#) is published on the Board's website.

### **Rural healthcare: the student perspective – a new podcast**

Caring for rural and remote communities can be a challenging and rewarding career path. In Ahpra's latest *Taking care* episode, we speak with three health students about their study journey and how they are supporting their communities.

Podiatry student Hayley Johns, medical student Harry Gaffney, and medical student and pharmacist Debra Lee join host Tash Miles to discuss the unique nature of healthcare and healthcare delivery in rural and remote settings.

More information about the podcast is in the [news item](#) on the Board's website, including a link to the podcast.

### **Latest registration data published**

The Board's quarterly registration data to 30 June 2021 is published on its website. Read the latest report [here](#).

### **Further information**

The Board publishes a range of information for podiatrists and podiatric surgeons on its [website](#). For more information see the [Ahpra website](#). Alternatively, contact Ahpra by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495.

A/Prof Cylie Williams  
**Chair, Podiatry Board of Australia**

23 August 2021