

## Communiqué

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26 February 2020

### February 2020 meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The Board meets face-to-face each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory functions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board.

The Board met on 26 February 2020 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

#### Engagement with stakeholders

Representatives of the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ), the Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd (OTC) and the Occupational Therapy Council of New South Wales (OTC NSW) were invited to attend the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Combined Meeting 2020 on 27-28 February 2020 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The Board met with key stakeholders as part of its Board meeting on 26 February 2020.

The combined meeting presented a valuable opportunity for the Board and its stakeholders to share information about their current and/or future projects and activities. The Board is keen to continue its engagement with its stakeholders and to share information on its key initiatives on a regular basis.

#### Call for applications for appointment to the Board

Due to the scheduled expiry of terms of appointment for a number of members with the Board, applications are now being sought from registered occupational therapists working in NSW, QLD, SA, WA and ACT/NT/Tas.

As a registered occupational therapist, you may also wish to express interest in the role of Board Chair.

Our main job is to protect the public. We do this through setting standards that must be met in order for someone to become and remain registered. Through a delegated committee, we consider individual applications from people seeking registration as an occupational therapist from across Australia and around the world, as well as considering notifications (complaints) made about occupational therapists. We work in partnership with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) which is responsible for implementing the National Scheme.

The Board sits 11 times a year. Meetings are usually held in Melbourne, although they are sometimes held in other capital cities. All Board members are appointed by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. Being a board member is a rewarding experience that requires time and input. It

offers a unique opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the profession and the public who access occupational therapy services.

The National Scheme has a commitment to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' leadership and voices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are strongly encouraged to apply, as are people from rural or regional areas in Australia.

If you are interested in finding out more information about the recruitment process, eligibility requirements specific to these vacancies and the roles of National Board Chairs and members please visit the [Ahpra website](#).

For enquiries, please contact [statutoryappointments@Ahpra.gov.au](mailto:statutoryappointments@Ahpra.gov.au)

Applications close **30 March 2020**.

### **Australian occupational therapy competency standards**

It has now been one year since the new [Australian occupational therapy competency standards](#) (the competency standards) have been in effect.

The competency standards outline the professional behaviour all occupational therapists should demonstrate to practice safely and ethically. They affect occupational therapists working across all practice settings, including research, education, management and other roles not involving direct contact with clients.

The Board has released a new [downloadable poster](#) that outlines what the public should expect from their occupational therapist and what to do if they are concerned about their care.

There are also a range of other resources produced by the Board to help occupational therapists understand what the standards mean to them, and how to apply the standards in their practice.

[Find out more](#) about the competency standards.

### **Revised registration standards take effect 1 December 2019**

The registration standards for Recency of Practice, Professional Indemnity Insurance and Continuing Professional Development came into effect on 1 December 2019.

The [revised registration standards were published on 31 July 2019](#) to give practitioners time to understand the revised requirements. Occupational Therapists should make sure they have read and understand the revised registration standards and know what they need to do to meet them. Some of the main changes are outlined below and you can read the registration standards in full on the [Board's website](#).

Every time occupational therapists renew their registration they must declare that they meet Recency of Practice, Professional indemnity insurance arrangements and Continuing professional development registration standards.

#### **Recency of practice (RoP)**

The [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#) requires occupational therapists to have practised a minimum of 750 hours over the last five years, 450 hours over the last three years, or 150 hours over the last year. Occupational therapists will also need to submit a professional development plan to the Board for approval if they are making a substantial change to the scope of their practice, for example from an administrative role to providing clinical care. The standard removes the requirement for occupational therapists to complete 30 hours of continuing professional development in the 12 months prior to applying for re-registration.

#### **Professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII)**

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The [Registration standard: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements](#) has been made easier to read and understand. To meet the registration standard, occupational therapists need to have appropriate insurance. It's likely an occupational therapists employer has PII cover for them but they should still check. If an occupational therapists works for themselves they should make sure they they have the correct insurance in place.

### **Continuing professional development (CPD)**

The [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#) requires occupational therapists to do 20 hours of CPD each year and five of these must be interactive. The standard specifies requirements for reflection and how practitioners should select CPD activities that contribute directly to maintaining or improving their competence and keeping them up to date in their scope of practice. The standard also specifies that exemptions will be granted in exceptional circumstances and there are examples of circumstances for when an exemption would be granted in the additional guidance documents supporting the standard.

You can find more information about the revised CPD registration standard in the CPD guidelines on the [CPD registration standard](#) webpage.

### **Approval of programs of study**

The Board agreed to approve the following programs of study accredited by the OTC and offered at the Albury Campus of Charles Sturt University in New South Wales until 31 December 2024:

- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours)

### **Quarterly registration data released**

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's occupational therapy workforce, including a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants. Registration data for the period September – December 2019 is now published on the Board's [statistic webpage](#).

### **National Scheme update**

#### **Mandatory notifications - health practitioners encouraged to seek advice about their own health**

Ahpra and the National Boards have published [new resources](#) to support practitioners to understand changes to the National Law about mandatory notifications requirements that came into effect on 1 March 2020.

The [resources](#) aim to encourage practitioners to seek the health care they need by removing fears that they'll be subject of an unnecessary mandatory notification and provide greater clarity to treating practitioners on when they need to make a mandatory notification.

The new resources are available on a hub on the [Ahpra website](#), including:

- revised Guidelines
- case studies
- detailed FAQs
- a myth busting document
- five videos, featuring registered practitioners and students
- social media posts, and
- graphics that can be shared.

Visit the Ahpra website to listen to the *Taking care* podcast episode '[A new look at mandatory notifications](#)', and read news items about the [amendments](#) and [revised guidelines](#).

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

It is important that your contact details are up-to-date to receive renewal reminders from Ahpra and information from the Board. You can check your details via the Login icon at the top right of 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.



### Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and its expectations of practitioners on its website at [www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au](http://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au) or [www.Ahpra.gov.au](http://www.Ahpra.gov.au). Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policy and guidelines affecting their profession.

### Julie Brayshaw

Chair

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

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Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.