

Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia.

On 1 July 2012, medical radiation practitioners across Australia joined the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Under the National Scheme, established by the Council of Australian Governments in 2010, there is a National Board for each profession, which is supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). These boards set the professional standards that each practitioner must meet to be registered.

The purpose of health practitioner regulation is to protect the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who have the skills, qualifications and knowledge to provide safe care are registered. Under the National Scheme, practitioners register once, renew yearly, and can practice anywhere in Australia (within the scope of their registration).

This first edition of the National Board newsletter outlines key information about the National Scheme and the new obligations medical radiation practitioners must meet under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory. Future editions will focus on the Board's activities, opportunities to engage with Board consultations, and contemporary issues of interest to all practitioners.

The Board has 12 members, including eight practitioner members and four community members. For details about the individual members of the Board, visit the *About Us* section of the website.

The Board encourages practitioners to access its website regularly. Using the Board as the principal source, medical radiation practitioners will have the most reliable, accurate and up-to-date information on regulatory matters that affect every individual practitioner and the profession

as a whole. We also strongly encourage practitioners to make sure to keep their contact details up to date with AHPRA to receive important information, such as registration renewal reminders.



Neil Hicks

Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

Snapshot of the profession

There are 13,121 medical radiation practitioners registered in Australia, according to Board data. The table below provides a snapshot of the registered workforce, by state and territory and registration category.

Providing data that accurately reflects the number of registered practitioners is one of the important benefits of the National Scheme. These data could not have been easily collated and reported before the advent of the National Scheme.

Registration data will in future be published in the *About Us* section of the Board website.

Table: Medical radiation practitioners: state and territory by registration type (September 2012)

State	General	Limited		Non-practising	Provisional	Total
		Postgraduate training or supervised practice	Public interest			
ACT	217			2	8	227
NSW	3,895			6	227	4,128
NT	98			1	7	106
QLD	2,661				4	2,665
SA	953				8	961
TAS	273			1	2	276
VIC	3,177	1	1	110	125	3,414
WA	1,172			2	2	1,176
Not stated	149	1		18		168
Total	12,595	2	1	140	383	13,121

Renewing your registration

Many medical radiation practitioners are due to renew their registration by 30 November 2012.

Eventually, the annual registration renewal date for all medical radiation practitioners will be 30 November each year. However, because some practitioners have transitioned to the National Scheme from local boards with different renewal cycles, it will take some time for the renewal dates to align nationally. >>

For the coming year, the renewal dates for medical radiation practitioners will be:

ACT	30 November 2012
New South Wales	30 November 2012
Northern Territory	30 November 2012
South Australia	30 November 2012
Victoria	30 November 2012
Tasmania	31 March 2013
Queensland	30 June 2013
Western Australia	30 June 2013

If you are not sure if you have to renew, check your details and registration expiry date on the [Register of Practitioners](#) at www.ahpra.gov.au. You can trust this record. If you have to renew by 30 November, this will be the registration expiry date on your record.

AHPRA will contact you (by letter or email) when it is time for you to renew. Log into the AHPRA website to check your contact details and make sure AHPRA has the correct email, phone and physical address details for you. You will be sent a reminder when your registration is due. Look out for this as confirmation that you can renew online.

Important information

The best way to stay in touch with news and updates from the Board is to visit our website regularly and to make sure AHPRA has each practitioner's up-to-date contact details, including a current email address.

Practitioner email addresses enable the Board to contact practitioners rapidly with important information such as registration renewals and news on standards, codes, guidelines and position statements that guide the profession.

Practitioners are therefore reminded to update their contact details with AHPRA if email addresses change when, for example, they move job or internet service provider. Practitioners are also reminded to ensure that the email address they provide will not reject Board correspondence as spam. All important documents and the latest information on Board activities and consultations are published on the website.

Practitioner obligations under the National Law

Under the National Health Practitioner Regulation Law (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory, practitioners must meet nationally consistent registration standards and be adequately qualified to be able to practise. Each National Board has registration standards, including the following five *mandatory standards* (which are common across all the nationally registered professions):

- continuing professional development
- criminal history
- English language skills
- professional indemnity insurance, and
- recency of practice.

As well as the five mandatory standards, the National Law also makes provision for grandparenting arrangements, which are the special transitional arrangements that provide a possible pathway to registration for experienced practitioners who do not have the approved qualifications proposed by the National Board. If you want to apply for registration under the grandparenting provisions you must apply prior to 30 June 2015.

The following summary of registration standards aims to help medical radiation practitioners to understand their obligations under the National Law. The full details of the standards are published on the Board's website. The Board encourages all practitioners who are uncertain about their obligations to read the full standard on the website.

Professional indemnity insurance

What is professional indemnity insurance (PII)?

The PII required for registration of health professionals is designed to cover the risks arising from a health practitioner's provision of health care to a person.

Why do I need it?

Under the National Law, a registered health practitioner must not practice their profession unless they have appropriate PII arrangements in force. The Board has determined that practitioners are required to have professional indemnity arrangements that provide:

- coverage of \$10 million for a single claim, and
- unlimited run-off cover.

Recency of practice

What is recency of practice?

Recency of practice refers to how recently you have practised your profession, as well as the nature and extent of that practice.

Why is there a recency of practice registration standard and what is it?

The standard requires practitioners to ensure that they are competent and fit to practice in the profession through the making of an annual declaration that their practice is current and in keeping with contemporary practice. If you are a registered medical radiation technologist but have not worked in the profession for at least three years, you will be required to demonstrate to the Board that you are competent to practise, or that you are updating your skills to ensure that you are competent, before being issued with a certificate of registration. More information is available in the [Registration](#) section of the Board's website.

Continuing professional development

What is continuing professional development (CPD)?

CPD is mandatory under the National Law. All registered health practitioners must undertake CPD.

The community has the right to expect that health practitioners will provide services in a competent and contemporary way, and meet best practice standards. CPD is an interactive process to maintain and extend the practitioner's knowledge, expertise and competence throughout his or her career.

What is the CPD standard?

Medical radiation practitioners must complete a minimum of 60 hours of self-directed CPD activities over a three-year cycle, with a minimum of 10 hours in any one year; or comply with the requirements of a CPD program approved by the Board. To help you understand this standard, the Board has developed CPD Guidelines, which are available on the website under [Codes and guidelines](#).

English language

Do the English language requirements apply to me even if I am from Australia?

Yes. This standard applies to all applicants for initial registration. It does not apply to students. In general, applicants who gained their qualifications overseas or who gained their qualifications in Australia but who did not undertake and complete their secondary education in English, in a designated English-speaking country (see list within the registration standard), will be required to provide specific evidence of their competency in the English language.

Criminal history

What if I have a criminal history from overseas?

All criminal history, whether from Australia or overseas, must be declared when applying for registration. Failing to declare your criminal history upon application for registration may jeopardise your application.

How will the Board decide if my criminal history is relevant to practising my profession and if it will register me?

The Board will consider 10 factors (which are set out in the standard) when deciding if your criminal history will affect your application for registration. Factors include such things as, for example, the nature and gravity of the offence and its relevance to health practice, time that has elapsed since the offence, whether or not the offence is part of a pattern of behaviour, and so on. While every case will need to be decided on an individual basis, the 10 factors provide the basis for the Board's consideration.

Mandatory reporting

In addition to the obligation to comply with registration standards, the National Law requires practitioners, employers and education providers to report 'notifiable conduct' to AHPRA in order to prevent the public from being placed at risk of harm.

Under the National Law, 'notifiable conduct' means a registered practitioner has:

- a) practised the practitioner's profession while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs, or
- b) engaged in sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of the practitioner's profession, or
- c) placed the public at risk of substantial harm in the practitioner's practice of the profession because the practitioner has an impairment, or
- d) placed the public at risk of harm because the practitioner has practised the profession in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards.

Practitioners are encouraged to read the Board's *Guidelines for mandatory notifications*, published in the [Codes and Guidelines](#) section of its website.

Who does what in medical radiation practice regulation in Australia?

In 2010, the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme commenced in Australia with 10 National Boards regulating health professions. On 1 July 2012, medical radiation practice and three other Boards joined the National Scheme.

The following information provides a brief overview of the role and functions of the National Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), as well as the transitional accreditation arrangements for the profession. These organisations exercise functions under the National Law.

Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au

- Primary role is to protect the public
- Registers medical radiation practitioners: diagnostic radiographers, radiation therapists, and nuclear medicine technologists
- Sets the national registration requirements and standards for all medical radiation practitioners
- Functions are defined under the National Law and include overseeing the receipt, assessment and investigation of notifications (complaints) against registered medical radiation practitioners*

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

www.ahpra.gov.au

- Supports the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia and the other National Boards that are responsible for regulating the health professions under the National Law
- Manages all registration and notification matters* on behalf of the National Board
- Manages the registration renewal process
- Is the contact point for medical radiation practitioners who have a question about their registration
- Is the contact point for health practitioners and the public who require information about making a notification

Accreditation

The National Board is considering how best to fulfil its obligations under the National Law to ensure that the public has access to suitably qualified practitioners.

The Board is taking great care to ensure that students and practitioners are not disadvantaged while the ongoing accreditation process is finalised. Therefore, the transitional arrangements that have been in place since August 2012 continue the previous arrangements.

- Students enrolled in approved courses of study will continue to be eligible for general registration when they have successfully completed their course.
- Overseas qualified practitioners seeking registration in Australia will continue to be assessed by the existing Board Committee (which was formed in January 2012).
- Qualifications and programs of study that automatically transitioned on 1 July 2012 will continue to be recognised.

The Board will release a statement when more information is available, which will be published on its website www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au.

*Except in NSW where notifications are managed jointly by the Health Care Complaints Commission and the Health Professional Councils Authority.

Students urged to apply online for a smooth path from study to work

Students of medical radiation practice who will graduate in late 2012 are being urged to go online to apply early for registration as a health practitioner.

An online graduate registration service for final year students launched by AHPRA last year aims to smooth the path from study to work by enabling students to apply for registration early. Graduates need to be registered before they can start practising and are encouraged to go online and apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course.

Students must make an application for provisional or general registration, depending on which course they would be graduating from. Before applying online, students can confirm which registration type they must apply for by visiting the National Board's website to review the list of approved programs of study.

More information is available on AHPRA's Graduate Applications webpage www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx.

Contact the Board

- By post: Neil Hicks, Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, G.P.O. Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001
- Online: To lodge an online enquiry form follow the *Contact us* link from the AHPRA homepage www.ahpra.gov.au
- Telephone: call AHPRA and the Board on 1300 419 495



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Board of
Australia