

---

## Chair's message

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board). The newsletter aims to update you about important topics such as continuing professional development, the Workforce Innovation and Reform Working Group and the end of the grandparenting provisions.

The Board has recently released a revised code of conduct, guidelines on advertising and mandatory notifications, and a new social media policy. We are now planning revisions to several registration standards. We encourage you to respond to our current consultations on the PII, CPD and recency of practice registration standards. We are keen to hear your comments.

We are also keen to find out what medical radiation practice issues you would like to know more about. Please take the time to complete a brief online survey which we have included a link to in this newsletter.

### Neil Hicks

Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

---

## Grandparenting provisions are ending

When the medical radiation practice profession entered the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) on 1 July 2012, there were provisions in place to ensure that practitioners in those states or territories that did not require registration were not unjustly disadvantaged because they were not automatically transitioned to the National Scheme as a state or territory registrant. These were known as grandparenting provisions under s303 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) and these provisions apply until 1 July 2015.

Under the grandparenting provisions an individual who does not hold an approved qualification for registration, but does have other relevant qualifications, training or experience practising the profession, may be able to apply for registration until 1 July 2015. All other eligibility requirements for registration will also apply.

For assistance in understanding the requirements of applications made under the grandparenting provisions of the National Law please visit the [Registration→Grandparenting](#) page on the Board's website. Please note: applications under this provision may only be made up until 1 July 2015.

---

## Codes, guidelines and standards – update

### Revised code of conduct, guidelines and new social media policy now in effect

Revised guidelines and codes of conduct, and a new social media policy, containing important information for all registered health practitioners have recently been released. Medical radiation practitioners need to familiarise themselves with this guidance to ensure their practice meets Board expectations.

The documents were released by the National Boards regulating registered health practitioners in Australia through the National Scheme.

The documents relevant to medical radiation practice are:

- revised *Code of conduct for medical radiation practitioners* (based on the common code)
- revised *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services*
- revised *Guidelines for mandatory notifications*, and
- a new *Social media policy*.

The documents are the result of a scheduled review three years into the National Scheme and are the first set of revised documents to be released this year, with more to come later in 2014.

You can view the documents under [Codes and guidelines](#) on the Board's website.

Further information is available in FAQs published at the [FAQ page](#).

### Advertising guidelines advice on testimonials is to be clarified

The National Boards have been monitoring discussions about the new advertising guidelines since their release, and propose to address some confusion in the professions and the community about the use of testimonials and the rights of consumers to have their say.

All National Boards, including the Medical Radiation Practice Board, have decided that the guidelines need to change to make it clearer that practitioners are not responsible for removing (or trying to have removed) unsolicited testimonials published on a website or in social media over which they do NOT have control.

The Boards cannot change the advertising requirements of the National Law.

The change will affect section 6.2.3 of the guidelines.

AHPRA and the National Boards are working together to progress this change.

Until then, AHPRA will be applying the guidelines consistent with information in the advertising [FAQs](#). This means practitioners are not responsible for removing (or trying to have removed) unsolicited testimonials published on a website or in social media over which they do NOT have control.

### Continuing professional development during time off

All medical radiation practitioners are required to undertake 60 hours of CPD over a three-year period. In special circumstances practitioners can apply to the Board for an exemption, for example during maternity leave. However, the Board encourages practitioners to maintain their CPD activities wherever possible. One advantage of doing this includes being able to demonstrate to the Board that efforts are being made to ensure a practitioner's skills remain relevant. This is taken into consideration when the Board considers applications for registration where the applicant does not meet the Board's *Recency of practice registration standard*.

If an applicant has taken mitigating actions such as continuing professional development, the Board may adjust its proposed conditions, such as a supervised practice requirement, accordingly.

### Professional indemnity insurance (PII)

At a recent information session in Perth the Board was asked, 'If I work in the public sector and therefore am covered by a government insurance arrangement, is this enough to meet the Board's PII registration standard?' The answer to this is yes.

Professional indemnity insurance provides medical radiation practitioners with insurance from civil liability.<sup>1</sup> This insurance generally includes cover for legal claims for compensation and associated expenses arising from practice.

The insurance arrangements in place for employees of public health services ensure that errors or omissions occurring within professional practice can be adequately compensated.

### Disciplinary matters

PII arrangements, particularly those provided by employers, may not provide cover for matters of a disciplinary character, which do not usually lead to awards of compensation to patients, clients or other persons who have suffered detriment as a result of a health practitioner's action. However, these types of matters may involve costs for the individual health practitioner.

The Board does not require health practitioners to have insurance cover for matters that do not involve the potential for compensation against a health practitioner. Examples are unlawful or unauthorised activities, regulatory or disciplinary matters including breaches of professional codes or ethics. However, the Board recommends that medical radiation practitioners consider their personal circumstances and seek professional insurance advice on additional indemnity arrangements.

### Consultation on PII

The Board is consulting on its PII registration standard. If you would like to receive information from the Board on this consultation and upcoming consultations, please sign up to the Board's distribution list by emailing [mrpbupdate@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:mrpbupdate@ahpra.gov.au).

---

## Opportunities to have your say

### Workforce Innovation and Reform Working Group

The Board's Workforce Innovation and Reform Working Group (WIRWG) has met on two occasions since February 2014 to develop strategies for workforce reform in medical radiation practice (MRP). The WIRWG consists of practitioners, Board and Accreditation Committee members and representatives from relevant associations and Health Workforce Australia. It will work with stakeholders throughout the course of its work and will invite practitioners to contribute to its work.

In the coming months, the WIRWG plans to survey practitioners to identify current practices in MRP. The results will inform its work on advanced and extended practice and other potential areas of workforce reform. The Board encourages practitioners to participate in the survey and provide other input throughout the year. If you wish to provide feedback or have queries about the work of the WIRWG, please contact Mark Marcenko, Chair WIRWG, at [medicalradiationconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:medicalradiationconsultation@ahpra.gov.au).

### Reader survey – what would you like to know more about?

The Board is seeking reader feedback to ensure that Board newsletters cover the issues of most importance to our readers. Please take 10 minutes to complete a brief survey (and remember you can add this to your CPD records as time spent on general CPD). You'll find the survey here: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/LLH22VY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LLH22VY).

---

<sup>1</sup> Liability: A person's present or prospective legal responsibility, duty, or obligation. From: Peter Butt (General Editor) (2004) *Butterworths concise Australian legal dictionary*, 3rd edition, LexisNexis Butterworths, Chatswood (NSW).

## Call for applications for appointment to medical radiation practice accreditation assessment teams

The Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee seeks applications from individuals interested in being included on a list of approved assessors for appointment to accreditation assessment teams. The committee establishes these teams to assess education providers and programs of study against accreditation standards.

As well as seeking individuals who have a background in medical radiation sciences, the committee is looking for people who have a sound knowledge of education and experience in teaching and learning but who may not have a background in medical radiation sciences.

The application process is ongoing – however, the committee is seeking to close the current round of applications by **Tuesday 13 May** in order to organise training for assessors in July 2014.

For more information including selection criteria and how to apply, please go to the [Accreditation→Assessors](#) web page.

## Snapshot of the profession

The Board publishes quarterly data updates on the registered medical radiation practice workforce. Statistics from the March 2014 update show that there are 14,288 registered practitioners in Australia, an increase of 437 practitioners since the December 2013 update. Of this total, 193 are non-practising.

There are 736 medical radiation practitioners with provisional registration.

Diagnostic radiographers make up the largest group of practitioners at 11,024 (an increase of 332 since December 2013), with radiation therapists the next largest group at 2,245 (an increase of 55).

Further details about the registered workforce are available on the Board's website under [About→Statistics](#).

**Table 1 – Medical radiation practitioners: registration type and subtype by state and territory (March 2014)**

| Medical Radiation Practitioner               | ACT        | NSW          | NT         | QLD          | SA           | TAS        | VIC          | WA           | No PPP*    | Total         |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| General                                      | 229        | 4,295        | 111        | 2,661        | 1,080        | 272        | 3,364        | 1,218        | 127        | 13,357        |
| Provisional                                  | 11         | 432          | 4          | 157          | 8            | 9          | 108          | 7            | -          | 736           |
| Limited (Total of Sub Types)                 | -          | 1            | -          | -            | -            | -          | 1            | -            | -          | 2             |
| Postgraduate Training or Supervised Practice | -          | 1            | -          | -            | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | 1             |
| Public Interest                              | -          | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | 1            | -            | -          | 1             |
| Non-Practising                               | 5          | 38           | 1          | 15           | 10           | 1          | 96           | 11           | 16         | 193           |
| <b>Total Practitioners</b>                   | <b>245</b> | <b>4,766</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>2,833</b> | <b>1,098</b> | <b>282</b> | <b>3,569</b> | <b>1,236</b> | <b>143</b> | <b>14,288</b> |

**Table 2 – Medical radiation practitioners: registration numbers by division by state and territory (March 2014)**

| Medical Radiation Practitioner  | ACT        | NSW          | NT         | QLD          | SA           | TAS        | VIC          | WA           | No PPP*    | Total         |
|---|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| Diagnostic Radiographer   | 165        | 3,656        | 101        | 2,239        | 873          | 206        | 2,673        | 998          | 113        | 11,024        |
| Diagnostic Radiographer and Nuclear Medicine Technologist                         | -          | 1            | -          | 10           | 1            | 1          | 1            | 2            | -          | 16            |
| Diagnostic Radiographer and Radiation Therapist                                   | -          | -            | -          | 1            | -            | -          | 1            | -            | -          | 2             |
| Nuclear Medicine Technologist   | 19         | 401          | 4          | 134          | 70           | 19         | 287          | 64           | 3          | 1,001         |
| Nuclear Medicine Technologist and Radiation Therapist                             | -          | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | -             |
| Radiation Therapist   | 61         | 708          | 11         | 449          | 154          | 56         | 607          | 172          | 27         | 2,245         |
| Diagnostic Radiographer and Nuclear Medicine Technologist and Radiation Therapist | -          | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | -            | -            | -          | -             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>245</b> | <b>4,766</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>2,833</b> | <b>1,098</b> | <b>282</b> | <b>3,569</b> | <b>1,236</b> | <b>143</b> | <b>14,288</b> |

\*No principal place of practice.

---

## National Scheme news

### Update on practitioner audit

AHPRA and the National Boards are developing a nationally consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards. Pilot audits were conducted for the chiropractic, optometry and pharmacy professions. The pilot audits were designed to determine the frequency, size and type of audits required and establish our audit methodology.

The results of phase one and phase two of the audit pilots are available on the [AHPRA website](#) under *Registration*. The phase two audit pilot was conducted in line with the recommendations of the phase one pilot report and involved auditing a fixed sample size from three professions.

A third phase started in May 2013 for the nursing and midwifery professions. The results from all phases of the pilot will be used to develop an overall auditing framework and audit program, which will be rolled out to all regulated health professions across Australia.

Each time a practitioner applies to renew their registration, they must make a declaration that they have met the registration standards for their profession. Practitioner audits are an important part of the way that National Boards and AHPRA can better protect the public by regularly checking the declarations made by a random sample of practitioners. Audits help to make sure that practitioners are meeting the standards they are required to meet and enhance the trust of the community in the profession by providing important assurances that practitioners are meeting their professional and legal obligations.

### Forthcoming audit of medical radiation practitioners

In August 2014, AHPRA on behalf of the Board will begin audits of compliance with its registration standards which include criminal history, CPD, PII and recency of practice. Practitioners are urged to be aware of the requirements of these registration standards. For more information please refer to the Board's [Audit page](#).

### First National Law offence prosecution results in guilty verdict

The first prosecution of an offence under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law has resulted in a guilty verdict and the accused person ordered to pay fines totalling \$20,000.

The Magistrates Court of WA handed down judgment in a criminal matter being prosecuted by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) against Ms Jayne Walton of Western Australia. Ms Walton, who pleaded guilty to all charges, was found guilty of using the title 'psychologist' and claiming to be a registered psychologist when she had not been registered for a number of years, in breach of the National Law.

The National Law protects the public by ensuring that only registered health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified are able to use [protected titles](#). The law allows for penalties for falsely using protected titles or holding yourself out to be a registered practitioner. The maximum penalty that a court may impose is \$30,000 (in the case of an individual) or \$60,000 (in the case of a body corporate).

The finding is an important milestone in the work of the National Scheme, which regulates 605,000 registered health practitioners across 14 professions. All registered health practitioners appear on the national register of practitioners, which is a searchable list that is accessible on the [AHPRA website](#). If a person does not appear on the register, they are not registered to practise in a regulated health profession in Australia.

### Protected titles for medical radiation practice

Protected titles for medical radiation practitioners under the National Law are:

- medical radiation practitioner
- diagnostic radiographer
- medical imaging technologist
- radiographer
- nuclear medicine scientist
- nuclear medicine technologist, and
- radiation therapist.

---

## Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit [www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au](http://www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au) for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ. Visiting the website regularly is the best way to stay in touch with news and updates from the Board.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on every web page under *Contact us*.
- For registration enquiries, call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- To update your contact details for important registration renewal emails and other Board updates, go to the AHPRA website: [Update contact details](#).
- Address mail correspondence to: Neil Hicks, Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.