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## Chair's message

Happy New Year for 2016. Last year the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board) reduced the registration fee by \$70 to \$180, as a result of greater efficiency in implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) and we will continue to focus on this in the coming year. We will also continue to improve the practitioner experience of engaging with the Board through further webinars and things like the CPD and audit tip sheets.

The CPD tip sheet has recently been updated to reflect the revised registration standard for continuing professional development which took effect on 1 December 2015. You can find out more about revised registration standards in this newsletter.

A recent change that will be significant for those who apply to become registered as a medical radiation practitioner for the first time, is the change to the *Equivalent qualifications list* and this is also detailed further on.

I wish to express my appreciation to Ms Belinda Evans, who resigned from the Board at the end of December 2015. Ms Evans' know-how and passion for the profession have been of great value to the Board's deliberations and we are all very grateful for her contribution over the past 18 months.

### Neil Hicks

Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

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## Revised CPD registration standard now in effect

The [revised registration standard for continuing professional development](#) (CPD) took effect on 1 December 2015.

The Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia has [previously published](#) the contents of the revised standards and supporting materials to help medical radiation practitioners understand the new requirements.

When registered practitioners renew their registration from **1 October 2016** they will be asked to declare that they have met the revised CPD standard.

A change in requirements means that medical radiation practitioners with provisional registration must now meet the standard. From 1 December 2015 provisional registrants must undertake continuing professional development.

For more information on the changes made to CPD registration and CPD guidelines, see the Board's [news item](#).

### Resources to help you with the revised requirements

The Board has published a CPD infographic to help registered medical radiation practitioners understand their CPD obligations at a glance. Our CPD tip sheet has also been updated to reflect the revised standard.

These resources are available on the Board's website under [Registration > Continuing professional development](#).

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## Revised standard for recency of practice to come into effect

A [revised recency of practice registration standard](#) will come into effect on 1 December 2016 and will replace the standard that is currently in place. This standard will apply to all registered medical radiation practitioners except those with non-practising registration. Practitioners will need to meet the obligations of the revised standards by the time they renew their registration in 2017.

The main change to the Board's recency of practice requirements is that a requirement for minimum hours of practice has been introduced.

To meet the standard, medical radiation practitioners must practise within their scope of practice at any time for a minimum total of 450 hours in the previous three years (approximately three months full-time).

The change may affect those medical radiation practitioners who are currently practising infrequently, or who have had a recent absence from practice, or who are taking a break from practice and wish to return to practice. The revised standard has been published well in advance of its start date to give practitioners adequate time to prepare for the changes to the recency requirements.

Please review the new registration standard to check whether you will be affected by the changes.

If you cannot meet the minimum hours of practice in the revised standard, this will not necessarily prevent you from returning to practice as a medical radiation practitioner. The standard sets out the options for medical radiation practitioners who don't meet the standard, including those with non-practising registration and medical radiation practitioners who are not registered and wish to return to practice after 1 December 2016.

The Board has also published guidelines and FAQ to support the standard and to help you understand its requirements. These and additional resources are accessible via the [news item](#) on the Board's website.

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## Equivalent qualifications list – changes now in effect

From 1 February 2016 changes to the Medical Radiation Practice Board's *Equivalent qualifications list* took effect.

The changes saw a large number of historical qualifications removed along with those programs whose qualification level is not equivalent to the qualification level of an approved program of study.

The *Equivalent qualifications list* was developed by the Board in the lead-up to national registration for medical radiation practitioners from 1 July 2012. The list recognised a range of qualifications that had been accepted for practice in those states and territories that did not have an established system of practitioner registration. The list enabled specific recognition of qualifications without having to rely on the grandparenting arrangements.

The National Law<sup>1</sup> requires that a qualification for general registration must be substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an approved qualification:

- Approved programs of study must meet a number of criteria including a minimum Australian Qualification Level (AQF level 7), quality assurance arrangements for higher education and professional accreditation of the program of study.
- In addition, the development of *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice* in 2013 established a minimum benchmark for practice in the profession. All general registered practitioners, including those from overseas and those returning to practice, are required to demonstrate that they meet the minimal capabilities for practice.

The Board has modified the list to include qualifications where the arrangements in that jurisdiction substantially meet the arrangements for approved qualifications in Australia.

For more information, and the revised list, see the [news item](#) on the Board's website.

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## Video for MRP graduates

An information video for graduating students has been developed to enhance understanding of requirements when seeking general registration as a medical radiation practitioner. This video complements the information provided on the Board's website and the [webinar](#) held for students nearing the completion of their approved programs of study in Australia.

The video and an accompanying infographic are now available on the Board's website on the [Registration](#) page.

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## Registration renewal update

In the recent renewal period, 97.34% of medical radiation practitioners renewed their registration and 98.3% of these did so online. This high rate of online renewal reflects the trend for all renewing practitioners across the National Scheme.

The Board will publish its next quarterly data update in March. For previous updates on the registered workforce, visit the [Statistics](#) page on the Board's website.

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## National Scheme news

### New video outlines objectives and role of the National Scheme

A new video and an accompanying infographic explaining the Australia-wide scheme that is in place to protect members of the public has recently been launched by AHPRA.

Working in partnership with the 14 National Boards, AHPRA helps regulate Australia's 630,000-plus registered health practitioners through a national scheme.

[The video](#) explains how the National Scheme works and how patients are protected.

Both resources are available on the [What we do](#) page of the AHPRA website. The video can also be watched on AHPRA's [YouTube channel](#).

### Medical radiation practice profile

The National Board will soon publish a report of its work in regulating medical radiation practice in the National Scheme during 2014/15.

The report will provide a profession-specific view of the Board's work to manage risk to the public and regulate the profession in the public interest. It is a profile of regulation at work in Australia for the 12 months ending 30 June 2015.

The data in this report are drawn from data published in the 2014/15 annual report of AHPRA and the National Boards.

Look out for the report in the next month on AHPRA's [annual report mini-site](#), where the 2014/15 state and territory summaries will also be published.

### Employer obligations: new awareness campaign

AHPRA has published a [news item](#) that outlines employers' obligations, and has ads running on LinkedIn and Facebook. This is the first step in the campaign, with many more activities to follow, including direct mail, paid print advertising, and in-language advertising (for the public campaign).

The campaign will be rolled out in stages and has three target audiences and objectives:

1. Employers – check the [register](#) before employing someone, keep up to date with changes to registrations, make mandatory reports when required.
2. Practitioners – know your obligations as a registered health practitioner.
3. Public – check to see if your practitioner is registered.

### National drug screening protocol in place from November 2015

There are health practitioners with a history of substance misuse who have restrictions placed on their registration. These restrictions are generally designed to keep the public safe while the practitioner remains in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

When restrictions are placed on a health practitioner's registration, AHPRA monitors the practitioner to make sure they are complying with the restrictions. This process is referred to as 'monitoring and compliance'.

From November 2015, all health practitioners who have restrictions placed on their registration by the Board as a result of past substance misuse will have routine quarterly hair testing, in addition to random urine testing. Routine hair testing provides additional information about the use of a wide range of drugs, over a longer time period. It therefore provides greater assurance to the Board that the practitioner is not impaired as a result of ongoing substance misuse.

More information is available in the AHPRA [news item](#).

### Dangers of button battery ingestion

From time to time the National Boards are asked to publicise important public health messages for health practitioners.

The Queensland Coroner's recent report into the death of a four-year-old girl, who died after swallowing a two-centimetre button battery, has highlighted the need for practitioners to be aware of the dangers these products present to patients if ingested, and to be better equipped to handle suspected cases.

When swallowed, lithium button batteries (also known as 'disc batteries') can become lodged in the oesophagus and the residual charge can cause electrolysis. This burns through tissue causing severe, irreversible damage.

Recognising battery ingestion can be difficult if the ingestion is not witnessed, as the child may present with non-specific symptoms such as poor feeding, irritability, fever, vomiting, drooling or cough. The ingestion of disc batteries requires urgent intervention.

Where a practitioner suspects that a young patient has ingested a disc battery, consistent with the *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners*, practitioners must take steps to notify the health practitioner requesting the investigation.

Further information is available from the [ACCC](#) or advice can be obtained by ringing the Poisons Information Centre in Australia on 13 11 26.

## 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 9275 9009 (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.