

Contents

Board's message	1
Practitioner profile	2
Retired registrant has seen more than most	2
Reminder to renew	2
Further information	2
Revised registration standards	2
Declare all criminal history	3
Advertising obligations	3
Snapshot of the profession	4
Online graduate applications now open	5
World Radiography Day	5
National Scheme news	5
2015/16 Annual Report now published	5
Keep in touch with the Board	6

Board's message

Welcome to the last newsletter for 2016 from the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board).

We have had another busy year focusing on increased efficiency across the Board and on patient safety.

One benefit of the Board's efforts to reduce costs resulted in the annual practitioner registration fee remaining unchanged at \$180, which is lower than the average registration fees that existed before national registration. A reduction in the number of face-to-face Board meetings to six per year is expected to reduce costs by 30 per cent and a deficit budget is planned over the next three to five years.

The Board's new registration standard for professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements took effect this year and our revised recency of practice registration standard is in effect from 1 December 2016. The new requirements are outlined in this newsletter.

In February, we introduced an examination to help in risk-based decision-making with the intention of enabling medical radiation practitioners to demonstrate that they are competent and safe to practise.

More information relating to the Board's work is available in the [2015/16 Annual Report](#). The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Boards in implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). It highlights a multi profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the Board will also publish a summary of our work regulating medical radiation practitioners in every state and territory. A specific medical radiation practice summary will also be released next year.

As 2016 draws to a close it marks the end of an era for Northern Territory-based diagnostic radiographer Ramalingam Gengatharalingam who has retired from the profession. Rama was first registered to practise in Australia in 1978 and has seen several major technological advances during his years of practice.

He helped establish Darwin's breast screening services and during his many years as a supervisor has supported a number of medical radiation practitioners in their efforts to learn and develop new skills. A practitioner profile about Rama features in this newsletter.

Finally, the Board congratulates Mark Marcenko (practitioner member from Tasmania) on his appointment as the new Chair which was announced by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council in its latest [communiqué](#). Mark is looking forward to introducing himself to registrants in the Board's first newsletter for 2017. Our thanks to outgoing and inaugural Chair Neil Hicks for his strong leadership of the Board for the past five years.

The Board looks forward to another great year ahead and wishes you and your family all the best for the upcoming festive season.

Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia



Practitioner profile

Retired registrant has seen more than most



Not every registered medical radiation practitioner can say they've seen major technological advances in how the profession operates but Ramalingam Gengatharalingam can do just that.

Better known as Rama Genga, the recently retired diagnostic radiographer from the Northern Territory has had a long career that saw him first registered in 1964 and registered to practise in Australia since 1978.

Trained in Sri Lanka, Rama has also practised in the United Kingdom and in South Australia.

The bulk of his career was spent in Darwin; 15 years with NT Medical Imaging (I-Med) as area manager and 13 years at the Royal Darwin Hospital as deputy/chief radiographer.

In February 2013 Rama joined Darwin Medical Imaging and was instrumental in setting up the practice. He worked as the practice manager until July 2013 before opting to continue as a radiographer part-time.

Rama is particularly proud of his involvement in establishing Darwin's breast screening services, especially because of the challenges of working in the Northern Territory which include a small pool of skilled practitioners and limited facilities for the provision of ongoing staff development.

There are 112 registered medical radiation practitioners in the Northern Territory, of which 99 work as a diagnostic radiographer.¹

Despite the local challenges, Rama has enjoyed managing a team of hard working and supportive staff.

'Being in a position to support staff to develop their skills and watching them fulfill their potential is what I've enjoyed the most about supervising others in the profession,' he said.

Rama's advice to young medical radiation practitioners is to take every available opportunity to cross skill within the various disciplines of radiography.

'The registration requirement of continuing professional development ensured that I kept abreast of rapidly advancing technologies which enabled me to effectively introduce and support these technologies within the practices I worked,' he said.

Rama has seen many advances over the years including the move from developing images by hand to laser imaging, the introduction of ultra sound, MRI, DSA and CT scans, and the change to online reporting.

Medical radiation practice was not a regulated health profession in New South Wales and South Australia until the introduction of the National Scheme in July 2010. Partial regulation meant only diagnostic radiographers were registered in the Northern Territory.

'I fully support this scheme; it should've been implemented a long time ago in line with countries like the UK,' Rama said.

Retired since July, Rama is looking forward to travelling and spending more time in his garden.

He will still take an interest in the profession and doesn't discount providing feedback on Board consultations in the future.

Reminder to renew

Medical radiation practitioners with general or non-practising registration are due to renew online by **30 November 2016**.

Under the [National Law](#)², registered health practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year.

About 80 per cent of the medical radiation practitioners due to renew have already done so.

Individuals who apply to renew their registration during the late period in December will incur an additional [late fee](#).

A series of new-look reminders to [renew online](#) are being sent to medical radiation practitioners by AHPRA on behalf of the Board. The email reminders include a helpful information box with links to the [password reset function](#) and to a [video](#) explaining how to renew online.

Further information

Useful information for medical radiation practitioners is on the Board's website:

- [Registration standards](#)
- [Registration renewal](#)
- [Renewal FAQ](#)

Revised registration standards

New professional indemnity insurance requirements now in effect

Medical radiation practitioners are reminded they must meet the revised registration standard for professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements by 30 November 2016.

In effect since 1 July 2016, the new standard applies to all registered medical radiation practitioners except those with non-practising registration.

¹ As of 30 June 2016

² The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law)

The key change in the new PII arrangements registration standard is that the minimum amount of cover specified in the current standard (\$10 million for a single claim) has been removed from the standard.

The new standard aims to take a more contemporary and flexible approach, and requires registrants who are taking out their own insurance to do an objective self-assessment, informed by policies provided by insurance providers, to ensure they have adequate and appropriate insurance arrangements or professional indemnity cover for their practice.

Further changes include requirements for:

- civil liability cover
- retroactive cover, and
- automatic reinstatement.

In addition the Board has removed the requirement for run-off cover to be unlimited, instead recognising the usual statutory arrangements that exist to provide adequate avenues for patient compensation.

As with the previous standard, practitioners employed in public health facilities around Australia will meet the new standard by virtue of the indemnity arrangements that exist for the public sector employees.

If your PII arrangements policy **is not due for renewal** before you renew your registration, you will need to contact your insurer, and if necessary, have your policy adjusted so that it meets the new standard by the time you renew your registration.

The Board has published [Guidelines: Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements](#), which provides further information for practitioners and insurance providers about the requirements for professional indemnity insurance arrangements.

Revised recency of practice registration standard in effect from 1 December 2016

The Board's revised recency of practice registration standard comes into effect on 1 December 2016. The key change to the Board's recency of practice standard is that a requirement for minimum hours of practice has been introduced.

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 currently taking a break from practice and wish to return to practice.

Renewing medical radiation practitioners need to be aware of the new requirements going into the next period of registration. The new requirements will need to be met by the time practitioners renew their registration in 2017. This does not apply to medical radiation practitioners with non-practising registration.

If a medical radiation practitioner cannot meet the minimum hours of practice in the revised standard, this will not necessarily prevent them 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 [published guidelines and FAQ](#) to support the standards and to help practitioners understand its requirements.

Declare all criminal history

The Board's criminal history standard must be met when applying for initial registration as a medical radiation practitioner and at each subsequent yearly renewal.

To meet the standard, the practitioner applying for registration or renewal must declare their criminal history, including:

- every conviction for an offence
- every guilty plea or finding by a court for an offence, regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded, and
- every charge made against the person for an offence.

These include convictions, pleas, findings and charges in any jurisdiction (including overseas) at any time, even if it was a long time ago, as well as spent convictions.

Under the National Law, spent convictions legislation does not apply to criminal history disclosure requirements. This means that when making a declaration about criminal history, applicants and registered health practitioners must declare their entire criminal history, from Australia and any other country, including any spent convictions.

Examples of criminal history that occurred in Australia or in another country that must be disclosed include:

- caught shoplifting at age 17, went to court and fined \$100
- was a driver in a motor vehicle accident two years ago that caused bodily harm; pleaded guilty, lost driver's licence for three months and was fined \$500, or
- charged with public nuisance three months ago and fined \$250.

All registered practitioners are also obliged under the National Law to inform the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia in writing within seven days if charged with, or convicted of, an offence punishable by 12 months' jail or more.

The Board regularly conducts [criminal history checks](#) and [audits](#). Remember, making a declaration is a legally binding statement. If you are unsure whether something needs to be declared, it is best to be candid and make full disclosures.

More information is available in the Board's [criminal history registration standard](#).

Advertising obligations

All health practitioners registered under the National Scheme have advertising obligations under the National Law.

The majority of medical radiation practitioners work in settings where they have little involvement in advertising services provided by the profession. However, where medical

radiation practitioners undertake to advertise their services, it is important they know their obligations.

Section 133 of the National Law regulates the advertising of regulated health services (a service provided by, or usually provided by, a health practitioner as defined in the National Law).

Section 133 provides that a person must not advertise regulated health services in a way that:

- a) is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to be misleading or deceptive; or
- b) offers a gift, discount or other inducement to attract a person to use the service or the business, unless the advertisement also states the terms and conditions of the offer; or
- c) uses testimonials or purported testimonials about the service or business; or
- d) creates an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment; or
- e) directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.

The Board's [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#) should be your first point of reference to understand your obligations. You may also wish to seek appropriate advice, for example, from your legal advisor and/or professional association.

The burden is on you to substantiate any claim you make that your treatments benefit patients. If you do not understand whether the claims you have made can be substantiated based on acceptable evidence, then remove them from your advertising.

AHPRA is responsible for prosecuting breaches of the advertising requirements in the National Law. This means that AHPRA with National Boards needs to decide whether there has been a breach of your advertising obligations.

As part of this process, we will use objective criteria to assess whether there is acceptable evidence to substantiate therapeutic claims in advertising. We will use appropriate experts to help us evaluate evidence where needed.

These are serious matters that can have serious consequences for your professional standing and your criminal record: **if in doubt about a claim, leave it out of your advertising.**

AHPRA and the National Boards will publish further information about advertising requirements from time to time to help practitioners better understand their obligations.

Snapshot of the profession

The Board regularly analyses its registration data and produces a number of statistical breakdowns about registrants to share with the profession and the community.

The latest update shows there are 15,303 registered medical radiation practitioners in Australia as at 30 June 2016. This is an increase of 56 practitioners since March 2016.

Of the total number, 522 have provisional registration, 234 have non-practising registration and six have limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice.

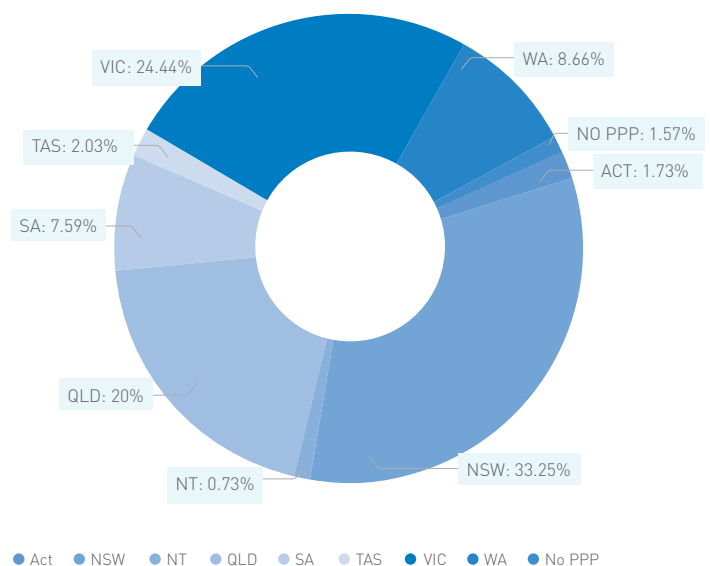
The largest numbers by division are diagnostic radiographers (11,840), followed by radiation therapists (2,352) and nuclear medicine technologists (1,095). See the table below.

State	Divisions					Total Count
	Diagnostic radiographer	Diagnostic radiographer and nuclear medicine technologist	Diagnostic radiographer and radiation therapist	Nuclear medicine technologist	Radiation therapist	
ACT	175	-	-	25	264	264
NSW	3,916	1	-	422	750	5,089
NT	99	-	-	2	11	112
QLD	2,410	10	1	153	487	3,061
SA	932	1	-	80	148	1,161
TAS	232	1	-	20	58	311
VIC	2,811	-	1	317	611	3,740
WA	1,079	1	-	66	179	1,325
NO PPP*	186	-	-	10	44	240
Total	11,840	14	2	1,095	2,352	15,303

*Principal place of practice

The largest number of practitioners are based in NSW (33.25%), followed by Victoria (24.44%) and Queensland (20%). See the chart below.

Medical radiation practitioners – percentage by principal place of practice (June 2016)



Practitioners between the ages of 25 and 34 make up the largest age group.

Medical radiation practitioners – by age group (June 2016)

Age group	Number of registrants
U-25	1,441
25-29	3,053
30-34	2,727
35-39	1,924
40-44	1,635
45-49	1,254
50-54	1,068
55-59	1,116
60-64	731
65-69	280
70-74	57
75-79	17
80+	0
Total	15,303

For further information, visit the [Statistics](#) page on the Board's website.

Online graduate applications now open

AHPRA is now calling for final-year students of medical radiation practice to apply for registration online.

An email sent to students on the Student Register urged individuals who will complete their approved program of study by the end of 2016 to [apply online](#) for provisional or general registration four to six weeks before finishing their course.

The type of registration a graduate must apply for is determined by the course they complete. The Board requires graduates of specific approved or equivalent programs of study to undertake a period of supervised practice while having provisional registration in order to meet the requirements of general registration.

All applicants need to post hardcopies of [supporting documents](#) to AHPRA to complete their application. Information about the supporting documents is included in the *Next steps checklist* which is emailed to each student upon receipt of their online application.

A recording of the Board's recent [webinar for students](#) who will soon graduate is now available on the Board's website. A transcript and the presentation as a PowerPoint are also published.

Students are encouraged to read the information on AHPRA's website under [Graduate applications](#). Graduates can start

practising as soon as their name is published on the [national register of practitioners](#).

World Radiography Day

World Radiography Day is celebrated annually on 8 November.

The date marks the discovery of electromagnetic radiation in a wavelength range known as x-rays by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen in 1895. This achievement earned him the first Nobel Prize in Physics in 1901.

One of the first x-rays ever taken was of the hand of Röntgen's wife. The x-ray shows her bones and the affect of her wedding ring on the image. When Anna Bertha saw her hand, she is reported to have exclaimed, 'I have seen my death!'

The internationally-recognised day aims to build greater awareness of the value that medical radiation practitioners contribute to safe patient care and to improving understanding of the vital role radiographers, radiation therapists and nuclear medicine technologists play in modern healthcare.

The Board wishes to express its thanks to all registered medical radiation practitioners in Australia for their contribution to the health and wellbeing of the Australian public.

*[Source](#)

National Scheme news

2015/16 Annual Report now published

The AHPRA and National Boards' Annual Report covering the financial year to 30 June 2016 was tabled in Parliament on Friday 11 November.

The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the National Boards, including the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, in implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). It also includes Board-specific data and highlights a multi-profession approach to risk-based regulation with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

Insights from the year include:

- **More practitioners:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners across the 14 regulated health professions. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, to 153,710.
- **Growth in notifications:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). This may be attributed to greater awareness of the National Scheme, due to a nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public.

- **Improved monitoring and compliance to ensure public safety:** 2,532 practitioners were being monitored for health, performance and/or conduct in 2015/16. A National Restrictions Library was launched, which currently contains 73 restrictions (conditions and undertakings) to improve national consistency.

Further highlights are included in the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia [news item](#). To view the 2015/16 Annual Report in full, along with supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance, see www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit the [Medical Radiation Practice Board](#) website 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 [online enquiry form](#).
- 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: Mark Marcenko, Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.