

Welcome to the Dental Board of Australia's November 2013 newsletter.

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Renew online, renew on time

Dental practitioners across Australia are reminded that their registration is due for renewal **by 30 November 2013**. Practitioners are urged to keep their email contact details given to AHPRA up to date so they don't miss the reminders to renew.

Make sure you renew your registration on time. The quickest and easiest way to do this is [online](#). Look out for your reminders to renew because online renewal is now

open. Letters will be sent to practitioners who have not supplied an email address.

When applying to renew your registration, you will be asked to make declarations in support of meeting the Board's registration requirements. It is important that you read the [registration standards](#) for recency of practice, continuing professional development, criminal history check and professional indemnity insurance before applying online so you understand the Board requirements.

Renewal applications received by AHPRA **after** 30 November will incur an additional late fee. If you haven't renewed by 31 December 2013, your registration will lapse. Your name will be removed from the [national register of practitioners](#). This means you must make a new application for registration and will **not be able to practise** until your application has been approved.

Dental practitioners who do not want to renew their registration to keep practising can simply ignore the reminders from AHPRA or go online to 'opt out' of renewing. Using the 'opt out' service puts a stop to renewal reminders.

An FAQ about renewal is available on the Board website under [Registration renewal](#).

New graduates: application for registration

AHPRA is now calling for online applications for registration from students who are in their final year of an [approved program of study](#).

Students of dentistry who will be completing studies at the end of 2013 are urged to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. An email to individuals on the Student Register urging them to apply early and online will be sent by AHPRA on behalf of the National Board.

Applications can also be made by completing a [paper application form](#). Students seeking registration in more than one division of dental practice must apply in hard copy. All applications, online or in hard copy, require students to post some supporting documents to AHPRA to complete their application. Students of dentistry are encouraged to read the information on AHPRA's website under [Graduate applications](#).

Graduates must meet the Board's [registration standards](#) and need to be a registered dental practitioner before they can start practising. New graduates are registered and eligible to start work as soon as their name is published on the [national register of practitioners](#).

Additional information for graduates

There is a wealth of useful information for new graduates on the Board's website (see [Registration standards](#) and [Policies, codes, guidelines and FAQ](#)).

The online register of practitioners can be used to check the registration status of all health practitioners, including prospective employers, who are registered to practise in Australia. See AHPRA's website under [Registration>Registers of practitioners](#).

There are some valuable resources that summarise some of the more serious complaints involving the dental profession and other health professions:

- AHPRA has published a table of [panel hearing decisions](#) dating back to July 2010 on its website.

Summaries have been provided where there is educational and clinical value. Practitioners' names are not published, consistent with the requirements of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). See AHPRA's website under [Legislation & publications>Panel decisions](#).

- Some summaries of [tribunal decisions](#) are provided on AHPRA's website to help share information and guide practitioners. See [Legislation & publications>Court and tribunal decisions](#).

Snapshot of the profession

At the end of June 2013 there were **19,912** registered dental practitioners throughout Australia. This is an increase of 143 practitioners since the last update was released in March 2013. The number of registered dental practitioners by state and territory, and by registration type and division is illustrated in the table below.

Dental practitioners: Registration numbers by division by state/territory (June 2013)

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
Dental Hygienist	42	364	8	131	228	16	182	283	13	1,267
Dental Hygienist and Dental Prosthetist		1		1						2
Dental Hygienist and Dental Prosthetist and Dental Therapist		1					1			2
Dental Hygienist and Dental Therapist	10	61	7	170	68	1	135	50	1	503
Dental Hygienist and Dentist	1						1			2
Dental Prosthetist	15	417	5	226	54	50	337	88	3	1,195
Dental Therapist	16	239	18	208	97	52	174	332	1	1,137
Dentist	278	4,912	95	2,863	1,144	206	3,642	1,576	304	15,020
Oral Health Therapist	10	209	5	291	90	6	161	11	1	784
Grand Total	372	6,204	138	3,890	1,681	331	4,633	2,340	323	19,912

Detailed statistics can be found in the [About>Statistics](#) section of the Board's website.

What's new from the Board?

Review of Scope of practice registration standard

After an extensive consultation process the Board considered a final revised *Scope of practice registration standard* and associated guidelines at its meeting in September 2013. The Board is currently finalising a position on the post-consultation draft and will continue to keep the profession and government informed of the progress of this draft version. Under the National Law, any proposal to change the current standard must be approved by Health Ministers.

The Board has carefully considered the possible impact of the revised standard to ensure that all dental practitioners are able to continue to work safely and with certainty, within their scope of practice.

The Board would like to remind all dental practitioners that the current *Scope of practice registration standard* remains in place until a new standard is approved and published.

Continuing professional development – new three-year cycle

The first three-year continuing professional development (CPD) cycle ended on 30 June 2013. A new cycle has now begun and runs from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2016.

At the end of the cycle you must have completed 60 hours of CPD activities, as required by the Board's CPD registration standard. This applies whether you are working full-time, part-time, or are registered in more than one division. Of the 60 hours, 48 hours of your CPD activities (80%) must be made up of clinically or scientifically based activities.

The Board expects you to engage in CPD activities each year, gradually accumulating a minimum of 60 hours over the three-year CPD cycle.

Compliance with other regulatory requirements

The Board reminds all dental practitioners to be aware of and comply with all relevant regulatory requirements, not just those that the Board develops.

This includes, but is not limited to, those requirements established under state and territory drugs and poisons legislation, radiology legislation and the requirements of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Drugs and poisons legislation

State and territory drugs and poisons legislation sets out the regulatory mechanisms relevant to a dental practitioner's capacity to possess, prescribe/supply and administer medications in Australia.

Consistent with the Board's *Code of conduct*, we expect all dental practitioners to make the care of their patient their first concern and to make sure they provide safe care to patients. Dentists' administration, supply and prescription of all medications should be consistent with providing safe dental care and must follow appropriate legislation and guidelines for the use and administration of medications. This should include reference to the National Prescribing Service Quality Use of Medicines (www.nps.org.au/).

Dental practitioners who practise across different jurisdictions need to be aware of any variations in legislation that may exist in different states or territories.

Tooth whitening/bleaching

We have published an interim policy that states:

Teeth whitening/bleaching is an irreversible procedure on the human teeth and any tooth whitening/bleaching products containing more than 6% concentration of the active whitening/bleaching agent should only be used by a registered dental practitioner with education, training and competence in teeth whitening/bleaching.

It is the ACCC's position that dentists cannot supply patients with take-home teeth whiteners above 6% concentration. We advise practitioners to review the ACCC's bulletin published on its [website](#). It states:

This bulletin provides information for consumers about hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide in DIY teeth-

whitening products for use at home including hazards associated with their use. It also assists suppliers of these cosmetic goods to ensure products they supply are safe and comply with the law.

Botulinum toxin

The Board supports the use of **botulinum toxin** by registered dentists with the education, training and competence for the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorder/dysfunction. This is currently the extent of the Board's support for the use of botulinum toxin in dental practice.

The interim policies of the Board are available on its [website](#).

Advertising

The Board reminds all dental practitioners that you are responsible for the content of all advertising material associated with the provision of your goods and services, regardless of the type of media (including social media) used to advertise.

You should ensure that your advertising complies with the requirements of the National Law and the [Guidelines for the advertising of regulated health services](#).

We are working with the other National Boards to finalise the revised version of these guidelines following an extensive consultation process.

Recency of practice

The Board's *Recency of practice registration standard* (the standard) sets out the requirements in relation to the nature, extent, period and recency of any previous practice for dental practitioners. You are reminded that the standard applies to dental practitioners who have not practised in the previous five years. The Board must be satisfied in these circumstances that a practitioner has maintained their competence to practise.

Recency of practice requirements apply whether a practitioner is already registered or applying to be registered in a division, speciality or endorsement.

For more information about recency of practice and the Board's return to practice requirements and processes see the Board's website at [Registration > Recency of practice](#).

Dental practitioner audit in 2014

The Board has agreed that auditing of dental registrants will begin in 2014. In addition to the audit of criminal history, dental practitioners will also be audited against the *Continuing professional development* and *Professional indemnity insurance* registration standards.

AHPRA and the National Boards are developing a nationally consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards. Pilot audits have been conducted which

were designed to determine the frequency, size and type of audits required and establish our ongoing audit methodology.

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 these declarations made by a random sample of practitioners. They help to make sure that practitioners are meeting the standards they are required to meet and provide important assurance to the community and the Boards.

Auditing of all professions has commenced. If you are selected for audit you will be notified in writing and requested to provide evidence that you meet the requirements of the standards.

Further information will be available shortly on our website.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme 2013 combined meeting

In August 2013 the Board meeting was held to coincide with the annual National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting.

The combined meeting is an annual event to encourage learning through sharing ideas, innovation and networking. The goal is to help us to better understand and respond to our wider regulatory and reform environment.

The combined meeting was attended by members of all of the National Boards, Chairs of the Boards' Registration and Notification Committees (RNCs), NSW Councils representatives, the Agency Management Committee, AHPRA staff and other partners including representatives of the Australian Dental Council and Dental Council of New Zealand. The Chairs of the RNCs also attended the Board meeting.

What documents is the Board developing?

Review of standards, guidelines and codes

As the Board for the dental profession we continue to review the registration standards, guidelines and codes that were developed before the National Scheme began. A very important part of this process is consultation.

We undertake two phases of consultation – preliminary and public.

During preliminary consultation we release the paper to key stakeholders, which allows us to 'road test' the feasibility of proposed changes as well as consider feedback that may be incorporated for the following phase.

Public consultations are widely communicated in communiqués and published on our website. This stage is open to everyone.

We will be consulting widely in the coming months on the following registration standards and guidelines:

- *Continuing professional development registration standard and associated Guidelines*
- *Professional indemnity insurance registration standard*
- *Recency of practice registration standard*
- *Endorsement for conscious sedation registration standard*
- *Specialist registration standard*
- *Criminal history registration standard, and*
- *English language skills registration standard.*

We invite all interested practitioners, members of the community and other stakeholders to provide feedback to the consultations.

For details about these consultations, please check our website at [News>Current consultations](#).

Dental specialties – competencies

The Board has recently started a substantial body of work on dental specialties. The project will primarily focus on:

- developing a list of competencies for each dental specialty, and
- reviewing the process for assessing applications for specialist registration from overseas-qualified practitioners.

We will work with the specialist academies and consult with other stakeholders during the project.

National Scheme news

Notifications guides published

In June, AHPRA published new guides for health practitioners and the community about how notifications are managed in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The [guide for practitioners](#) and a series of fact sheets explain to practitioners what happens when AHPRA receives a notification on behalf of a National Board. The information complements the direct correspondence that individuals receive if a notification is made about them.

The practitioners' guide clearly explains what happens after a concern has been raised about a health practitioner, who decides what happens, how AHPRA works with health complaints entities (on behalf of the Board) and what practitioners can expect from those processes.

AHPRA has also developed a guide for the community about making a notification about a health practitioner. This guide for notifiers, *[Do you have a concern about a health practitioner? A guide for people raising a concern](#)*, will be an early focus for feedback from the newly established Community Reference Group for AHPRA and the National Boards.

Both guides are published online on the AHPRA and National Boards' websites in a wholly revised section on [complaints and notifications](#).

Community Reference Group

AHPRA and the National Boards have recently established a Community Reference Group, which had its first meeting in June 2013. This is the first time a national group of this kind, with a focus on health practitioner regulation, has been established in Australia.

The group has a number of roles, including providing feedback, information and advice on strategies for building better knowledge in the community about health practitioner regulation, but also advising National Boards and AHPRA on how to better understand and meet community needs.

Members are listed on the [Community Reference Group Members page](#) and communiqués from the group's meetings are published on the [Communiqués page](#) after each of its meetings.

Professions Reference Group

The Professions Reference Group was set up in 2012. It is made up of representatives of the professional associations for the professions included in the National Scheme, with participation from AHPRA's CEO and senior staff. Quarterly meetings provide an opportunity for AHPRA to brief the professions about its work and for the professions to ask questions about emerging issues relevant to regulation. The group also provides expert advice to AHPRA in developing a range of information for practitioners, such as the recently published [notifications guide and fact sheets](#).

By working with the group, AHPRA has also been able to establish a practitioner consultative group, made up of individual practitioners nominated by their professional association who are willing to provide feedback on proposals and systems improvements, to inform change and improve services ahead of large-scale implementation.

Regulator logos on practitioner websites

Since the implementation of the National Scheme, some practitioners have sought permission to reproduce AHPRA's logo or their profession's National Board logo on their business website.

AHPRA and the National Boards have a strict logo use policy and rarely grant permission for their logos to be used by third parties.

The roles of AHPRA and the National Boards in the National Scheme make it inappropriate for either party to endorse, or be perceived to be endorsing, individuals and organisations; their products or services.

Practitioners who have reproduced the AHPRA or a National Board logo on their business website should remove it and consider publishing a text link to www.ahpra.gov.au, advising that their registration to practise can be confirmed by checking the national register of practitioners.

Update your contact details

Please check your contact details and update them if necessary in order to receive regular reminders from the Board and AHPRA. Email accounts should be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to a 'junk email' or 'spam' box or account.

If you have not yet provided your email address to AHPRA or the Board, please do so as a matter of urgency.

To update your contact details, go online at www.ahpra.gov.au, click 'online services', use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have a User ID complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry, or call 1300 419 495.

Keep in touch with the Board

As always, we encourage all dental practitioners to regularly check the website at www.dentalboard.gov.au for information and updates relating to the dental profession.

- Visit our website for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets. Board communiqués and consultation papers are published on the site under the [News](#) tab.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries link](#) on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Executive Officer, Dental Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

Locations of AHPRA state and territory offices are listed on the AHPRA website under the [About AHPRA>Contact us](#) tab.