
Chair's message

Welcome to the sixth newsletter of the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board). The newsletter aims to update you about important topics such as renewal, development of an examination, supervised practice and audits.

During renewal this year, the Board will invite you to complete a short survey on innovation and advanced practice in the workplace. We encourage you to respond to this to help us develop policies and professional standards to enable a flexible and sustainable workforce.

The Board has begun work on the development of an examination. An examination will provide an additional regulatory lever that will assist the Board's decision making. In the coming months the Board will undertake wide ranging consultation as to how an examination might be used in relation to limited registration.

Neil Hicks

Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

Renewal of registration and workforce survey

The Board has launched its 2014 renewal of registration campaign and AHPRA has sent email reminders to medical radiation practitioners (practitioners) who have provided an email address.

Practitioners should act now if their contact information has changed to not miss future reminders to renew. To update contact details visit the Board's website and use the appropriate link under online services for practitioners. A user ID and secure password is needed. Practitioners who have forgotten their user ID can complete a web enquiry form. Select 'Online Services - Practitioner' as the category type.

The registration renewal date for practitioners with general or non-practising registration is 30 November 2014. The quickest and easiest way to renew registration is [online](#).

Renewal applications received during December will incur a late payment fee.

Under the National Law¹, practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the Register. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise in Australia. A fast track application can be made, but only during January. The practitioner cannot practise until the application is processed and the national register is updated.

Practitioners should read the Board's registration standards carefully before applying to renew as information in support of declarations made in an application could be requested.

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

A renewal FAQ is available on the Board's website.

When renewing online, practitioners participate in the annual Health Workforce survey. Survey responses will help inform workforce planning and provide a comprehensive profile of Australia's current regulated workforce. This year, the Board is inviting practitioners to complete a short additional survey that asks about innovation and advanced practice in the workplace. This will help the Board develop policies and professional standards that enable the continuous development of a flexible and sustainable medical radiation practice workforce.

Meeting with radiation licensing authorities

Members of the Board met with state and territory radiation licensing authorities on 22 September to discuss issues of mutual interest. Discussions focussed on the ways in which the Board and the licensing authorities can work together on a range of regulatory matters including complaints involving practitioners and radiation use, practitioner registration, licensing as it relates to diagnostic computed tomography examinations, hybrid imaging and x-ray operators.

Upcoming consultation – limited registration

The Board is currently examining how it might use limited registration more effectively. Limited registration is a category of registration for practitioners who have not completed an approved program of study or are not qualified for general registration. Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice may be used to enable a practitioner holding a *relevant* qualification to be registered for the purposes of undertaking an examination, assessment, supervised practice or post graduate training.

In the coming months the Board will develop a consultation paper that will look at some of the issues involved with limited registration.

Development of an examination

The Board has commissioned the National Examination Committee (Committee) to develop an examination to assist the Board in decisions relating to registration.

The examination is based on the Board's *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners* that identify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to safely practice diagnostic radiography, radiation therapy and nuclear medicine technology.

The purpose of the examination will be to support the quality and integrity of decision-making when assessing applications for registration from the following classes of medical radiation practitioners:

- applications for limited registration
- applicants returning to practice after a significant time away from practice
- registrants requiring assessment for remediation of practice, or
- supervised practitioners who have not made adequate progress or failed to meet the requirements of a supervised practice program.

The development of the examination is being supported by a number of academics, clinical educators and practitioners from all 3 divisions of registration, along with external advisors with extensive experience in the development of major national examinations both in Australia and overseas.

Supervised practice

As previously reported, the arrangements for supervised practice will change for 2015, with AHPRA administering the supervised practice program on behalf of the Board.

This means students completing their program of study at the end of 2014 will enrol in a different program for supervised practice in 2015. Any supervised practitioners currently enrolled in the programs run on behalf of the Board by the AIR or ANZSNM will continue in that program.

The new program is based on the Board's *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice*. The [Supervised practice program guide](#) and supporting materials have been published on the Board's website. The supervision plan provided in the guide identifies the capabilities a practitioner must demonstrate by the conclusion of their program, and also includes advice as to how a capability can be confirmed during and at the completion of a program of supervised practice. The Board recognises that each workplace and each practitioner is different; therefore a supervision implementation plan should be tailored for each practitioner.

The program will continue to be for 48 weeks, with practitioners expected to undertake sufficient procedures in a range of clinical settings and diverse patient/client presentations to satisfy the supervisor of the practitioner's capability. There will be some changes to administrative arrangements, such as the enrolment process for practitioners and the way assessments are submitted, but the Board's aim is to make the transition to the new arrangements as smooth as possible.

The Board has held a series of information sessions for supervisors regarding the 2015 supervised practice program and will also hold a **webinar on Wednesday 8 October**, at 6pm (AEDST) that can be accessed from anywhere in Australia. Please email Board-MRP-RSVP@ahpra.gov.au to receive the access details.

The Board will also offer supervisor training workshops. The training will be provided by Teaching on the Run - a nationally recognised program that enables clinical supervisors to apply adult education principles in their everyday work situation. Around 20 MRP supervisors from across Australia will undergo training to become an accredited facilitator of Teaching on the Run to deliver the workshops to other MRP supervisors in their local area.

If you are interested in attending the two day workshop to be held in late October and are willing to facilitate at least one training session for other supervisors, please email mrpsupervisedpractice@ahpra.gov.au, confirming that you also have your line manager/employer support to attend the facilitator workshop and deliver around 8 hours of training to other supervisors. There will be no cost to attend the facilitator workshop and travel costs will be paid by the Board.

Further information will also be provided on the [Board's website](#) and in future newsletters. If you have any queries please email mrpsupervisedpractice@ahpra.gov.au.

Panels

Anyone with a concern about a health practitioner can make a notification to AHPRA, which if appropriate, instigates a process of investigation and further actions.

During the notifications process, the Board, working closely with the relevant state/territory health complaints entity, may decide that the practitioner who is the subject of the notification needs to be referred to a panel.

In preparation for this, the Board has a list of approved persons for appointment to panels who may be called on to be part of a health panel or performance and professional standards panel if required.

The Board is seeking applications from general registered medical radiation practitioners with a minimum of three years current and recent experience, in the divisions of radiation therapy, diagnostic radiography and nuclear medicine, interested in being included on a list of approved persons for appointment to panels to assist the Board in its primary role of protecting the public. Appointments are for up to three years, with eligibility for re-appointment, and are expected to commence in late 2014. The National Board is seeking candidates who practise and reside in the following states and territories:

- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

Recruitment, to the extent practicable, will exclude individuals whose residence or principal place of practice is in a co-regulatory jurisdiction (i.e. NSW).

For more information or to download the application guide and application form visit the [Panel Member Recruitment](#) page on the AHPRA website.

Certificate of Registration Status now available online

New process makes it easy

Registered health practitioners can now request a Certificate of Registration Status (CoRS) using the online AHPRA portal. In the past this was a manual process involving a form which was either posted or hand-delivered to an AHPRA office. Practitioners can now:

- apply online by [logging onto online services](#), or find out more information on our [Practitioner services page](#) of the AHPRA website, or
- apply using the [PDF form](#) (245 KB), which is available for download from our [Common application forms page](#) or the [Practitioner services page](#) of the AHPRA website.

There is a fee of \$50 for each CoRS.

What is a CoRS?

When practitioners are seeking registration or employment that requires them to be registered outside Australia, the regulatory authority in that jurisdiction may require a [Certificate of Registration Status \(CoRS\)](#). This document is also referred to as a Certificate of Good Standing or Certificate of Current Professional Status by some regulators.

The certificate provided by AHPRA:

- identifies the National Board and the recipient organisation
- lists practitioner-specific information including key registration dates, details of any current proceedings, suspensions, cancellations and/or any other relevant information, such as active conditions, undertakings, cautions and reprimands, and
- includes the date of issue of the certificate.

AHPRA offers a service to practitioners to provide a CoRS to regulatory authorities in other countries and some other approved organisations, including a number of specialist colleges. Approved organisations can be found on AHPRA's website under [Practitioner services](#).

The certificate is never provided to the requesting practitioner or to an employer, and can only be sent to an AHPRA-approved regulatory body or organisation.

These changes are part of our ongoing work with AHPRA to improve and streamline services for registered medical practitioners.

Audit of registered health practitioners continues

Why audit?

Audits are an important way the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia and AHPRA can better protect the public. AHPRA, on behalf of the Board, conducts random audits to ensure that practitioners are meeting the mandatory registration standards and provide assurance to the community and the Board.

Audits of random samples of practitioners from all professions will occur periodically throughout the year. Registered health practitioners may be audited at any time on any one of the mandatory registration standards.

What information is being audited?

Each time you apply to renew your registration as a medical radiation practitioner, you make a declaration that you have (or have not) met the registration standards for the profession. The audit requires that you provide further information to support your declarations.

What is the process?

The selection for audit is random. You may be audited at any time. If you are selected for audit you will be required to provide further information to support your registration declarations.

You will receive an audit notice in the post, and a checklist that outlines what documentation you need to provide to demonstrate that you meet the standard(s) being audited. The notice will identify which standards are being audited – these may be for recency of practice, CPD, professional indemnity insurance and/or criminal history.

You will have four weeks to provide the requested documentation to AHPRA.

AHPRA will review your supporting documentation against the declarations you made in your last renewal application.

AHPRA may request further information and/or refer cases of non-compliance to the National Board or its delegated committee for decision.

You will be advised by letter of the outcome of the audit.

Further information is available on the Board's website on the [Audit page](#).

National Scheme news

Three-year review of the National Scheme

The independent review of the national scheme is underway and a consultation paper is now [published](#).

The terms of reference for the review are published at [Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council website](#) under 'media releases' on the right-hand tab. The review – led by independent reviewer, Mr Kim Snowball – was built into the intergovernmental agreement that set up the framework and governance arrangements for the National Scheme. The agreement stated that the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) would initiate an independent review after three years of the National Scheme's operation.

The National Boards and AHPRA are actively participating in the review process. Opportunities for comment are detailed in the [consultation paper](#).

Data access and research policy

One of the objectives of the National Scheme is to protect the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered. To achieve this objective AHPRA and the National Boards are increasing the use of data and research to inform policy and regulatory decision-making. Specifically, we're building organisational capacity for analysis, supporting external collaboration on regulatory research, and conducting or supporting high-value regulatory research and analysis.

To do this well, we must effectively govern access to data generated by the National Scheme². We can provide access to de-identified data, as governed by the National Law and the relevant privacy laws and policies, but strict limits exist. These limitations are explained on the [Data access and research page](#) of the AHPRA website, which also includes a downloadable [application form](#) for interested researchers.

AHPRA and the National Boards encourage applications from researchers whose projects aim to deliver regulatory improvement and health workforce reform.

Four-year anniversary of the National Scheme

July marked the four-year anniversary of the National Scheme (with Western Australia joining in October 2010). Reflecting on the past four years, AHPRA Chair, Mr Michael Gorton AM, said the National Scheme had delivered important benefits for the quality and safety of the health system in each state and territory and for health practitioners and the community.

The National Scheme was the product of an important national health workforce reform, which was internationally significant in its scale and ambition.

Headline achievements in the last four years include:

- registering more than 618,000 health practitioners with national mobility of registration
- establishing and maintaining a searchable national online register that makes it easier for the Australian community to find out about the registration status of all registered practitioners
- increasing online renewal rates dramatically (95 per cent average), making it easier for practitioners to renew on time
- establishing data exchange with partners such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Medicare Australia to greatly improve workforce data for policy and planning, and
- developing a comprehensive set of regulatory policies and standards, across and within professions, to ensure appropriate protection of the public.

Queensland – new arrangements for handling notifications from 1 July 2014

From **1 July 2014** a new law came in to effect in Queensland, the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*.

From this date, all complaints about Queensland health practitioners will be received by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) who will either manage the matters or refer them to the relevant National Board to manage.

Complaints that were made to AHPRA or National Boards before 1 July 2014 will generally continue to be managed by AHPRA on behalf of National Boards. However, under the new law the Office of the Health Ombudsman can request that a matter be referred to them to be managed. If this were to happen, AHPRA will inform both the notifier and the practitioner who is the subject of the notification.

For information about the Office of the Health Ombudsman please go to www.oho.qld.gov.au or call 133 646 (133 OHO).

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 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).

To update your contact details for important registration renewal emails and other Board updates, go to the [AHPRA website](#).

Address mail correspondence to: Neil Hicks, Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.

² National Registration and Accreditation Scheme