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## Chair's message

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2015 from the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board). In this edition of the newsletter we go behind the scenes to get the practitioner's perspective on continuing professional development (CPD). We also give you the latest news on the upcoming audit of registration standards, accreditation, supervised practice and international criminal history checks.

Audit of registration standards for medical radiation practitioners will begin in May this year and it's important for all medical radiation practitioners to be prepared. At renewal of registration you make declarations that you have met registration standards. Audit is the qualitative check to ensure that registered practitioners meet the standards in a consistent way. When you are requested to by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), you must provide information and evidence that you meet the registration standards.

This month we speak with Adelaide radiation therapist Holly Window, who provides a very useful perspective on her experiences and how she stays on top of CPD requirements. Using feedback from practitioners at the Board's information sessions, the Board has developed some handy tip sheets on 'Staying on top of your CPD' and 'Preparing yourself for audit' that you are encouraged to read.

The Board recently approved the accredited medical radiation practice programs of study offered by Curtin University and Deakin University. This follows the approval late last year of the accredited program of study offered by Charles Sturt University. This was the first medical radiation practice program of study to be accredited and approved under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The Accreditation

Committee established by the Board has developed sound standards and processes that the Board has full confidence in and we look forward to working with the committee to approve more programs of study across Australia.

The Board has also been working with AHPRA to implement a new procedure for checking international criminal history and strengthening drug screening of registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment, in order to provide greater public protection.

If you would like more regular updates from the Board about its work, you can sign up to its general distribution list by going to the Board's home webpage and clicking 'receive updates'.

### Neil Hicks

Chair, Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

## Workforce survey

The Board would like to thank everyone who participated in the recent workforce survey conducted during the registration renewal period last year. The purpose of the survey was to gain a more detailed understanding of areas of advanced practice and extended practice carried out by registered practitioners. Around 13,000 registrants responded to the survey and analysis of responses is underway.

## Supervised practice

From November 2014, recent graduates have enrolled in the Board's supervised practice program, which is administered by AHPRA. Currently the program has over 550 supervised practitioners and around 400 experienced medical radiation practitioners who are providing supervision and guidance to junior members of the profession.

The Board's program is now the only supervised practice program available for graduates. It is based on the Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice. As previously reported, the framework for supervised practice is provided by the *Supervised practice registration standard*, *Supervised practice guidelines* and the *Supervised practice program guide*, all of which can be accessed on the Board's website. Graduates and supervisors are encouraged to become familiar with the program guide.

Practitioners involved with supervised practice are required to practise in a way that is consistent with the standard and guidelines. Graduates must hold provisional registration and join the supervised practice program by completing an application form. Principal supervisors are required to complete a declaration form and submit an implementation plan that outlines how the supervised practitioner will meet or demonstrate the professional capabilities relevant to their division of registration. The four assessments over the year-long program are submitted by supervisors through the Board's website.

Arrangements with the professional associations, the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) and the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine (ANZSNM), will see the final cohort of supervised practitioners finish in these programs by 31 March 2015.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the work of AIR and ANZSNM and thank them both for their contributions to practitioner education and development. Their respective work in the area of supervised practice has provided a solid foundation for a generation of registered practitioners.

If you have questions about supervised practice you can send these to [mrpsupervisedpractice@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:mrpsupervisedpractice@ahpra.gov.au).

## Accreditation

The Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee recently accredited programs of study offered by Curtin University and Deakin University.

The Board considered the accreditation reports and approved the following programs of study as providing qualifications for the purposes of general registration:

- Curtin University Bachelor of Science (Medical Imaging Science) in the division of diagnostic radiography
- Curtin University Master of Radiation Therapy in the division of radiation therapy, and
- Deakin University Bachelor of Medical Imaging in the division of diagnostic radiography.

The Board's approval takes effect when the programs of study are included on the Board's list of 'approved programs of study' which is published on the Board's website.

Under the National Law<sup>1</sup>, the Accreditation Committee must monitor each approved program of study to ensure it continues to be satisfied the program and provider meet the accreditation standards. For more information on accreditation processes and approved programs of study please see the [Accreditation](#) section on the Board's website.

## Audit – 2014 outcomes

Each time a registered health practitioner applies to renew their registration, they make a declaration that they have (or have not) met some or all of the registration standards for their profession. During audit practitioners are requested to provide information that supports their declarations, which may include an explanation why some requirements have not been met.

AHPRA has finalised the 2014 audit of medical radiation practitioners. Opposite is a graphic that provides some interesting facts and outcomes from the 2014 audit process.

## Forthcoming audit of medical radiation practitioners

In May 2015, AHPRA, on behalf of the Board, will undertake audits of compliance with the Board's registration standards including criminal history, CPD, PII and recency of practice.

We urge all practitioners to be aware of the requirements of these registration standards. For more information please refer to the Board's [Audit page](#).

# audit outcomes

96%

of practitioners were compliant with the audited registration standards.

## what is the audit process?

- 1 Registrants are randomly selected for audit and receive an audit notice in the mail.
- 2 Those selected have 4 weeks to provide the requested documentation to AHPRA. We send a checklist to assist in preparing the documentation as evidence of the activities which meet the requirements of the standard.
- 3 Once AHPRA has received the completed checklist and supporting documentation, the submission will be compared against the declarations the made in the registrant's last renewal application.
- 4 AHPRA may request further documentation be provided and/or refer cases to the National Board or delegated committee for further investigation.
- 5 Registrants will be advised of the outcome of the audit.

## CPD requirement is also an opportunity – practitioner profile

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a requirement that all medical radiation practitioners must meet in order to stay registered with the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia.

This requirement motivates radiation therapist Holly Window to be observant when it comes to learning opportunities in her workplace that will enhance her practice.



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

'The CPD requirement has definitely driven me to improve my skills and knowledge, particularly in areas where I felt I had a weakness or a lack of skill and understanding,' Holly said.

A radiation therapist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital Radiation Oncology Department, Holly is in her first role after qualifying two years ago.

She meets annually with a senior radiation therapist to discuss her personal and professional development.

Goals are set and a plan is put in place to help Holly meet the development milestones that have been mutually agreed to.

'We also review the goals that I had set for the previous year and if I haven't met them, we discuss the reasons why and reassess these goals to make them more achievable,' Holly said.

As well as her annual performance review, Holly also regularly seeks out senior staff for guidance on improving her skills and knowledge and does further training where required.

The majority of Holly's CPD activities are departmental in-services and specific training sessions organised by her supervisor but she does make a conscious effort to do self-directed activities, such as reading journals and mentoring students, to ensure participation in a variety of CPD activities.

'I really enjoyed a communication workshop where I learnt a lot about communicating with patients – in particular, how to communicate with patients who might be angry, upset or depressed,' she said.

'I had felt that this was an area where I could enhance my skills and the workshop enabled me to do this by applying my learning to the clinical setting.'

Not only does Holly focus on her own professional development, but she is also involved in teaching other staff how to navigate and use an offline review program for CBCT imaging.

This experience resulted in Holly reflecting upon her learning and led to the consolidation of her own skill set when using the offline review program.

'When I started teaching others I found that my own understanding of this task became clearer and more succinct,' she said.

'I was able to reflect on what I had taught others and an analysis of the steps involved in performing the task enabled me to further improve and consolidate my own knowledge.'

Holly is now more confident in her ability to teach others and feels that her instructions and own practice are much more streamlined and efficient.

She encourages all medical radiation practitioners, especially individuals who haven't been practising long, to be motivated to do CPD activities.

'It's very beneficial to your learning and it is such a great feeling to reflect upon what you have learnt and see how far you have come,' Holly said.

'Use your time at work wisely to update your CPD logbook and reflect upon your learning.'

Holly recommends medical radiation practitioners speak to their supervisor about strategies for undertaking CPD activities or about having 'protected time out' for CPD if they are struggling to meet the [Board's requirements](#).

'I follow the Board's guidelines to ensure that I am meeting the CPD requirements, which include participating in 60 hours of CPD over three years, with a minimum of 10 hours a year,' she said.

'I use a CPD logbook provided by my supervisor which has been created based on the [Board's guidelines for CPD](#) and am aware that the majority of the activities must be substantive.'

Holly has been audited by her workplace as part of an internal audit to check that she is on track with CPD activities but not by the Board.

'Auditing is useful to ensure that CPD requirements are being met so that practitioners are up to date in terms of their skill and knowledge and are providing a safe and high quality service to patients,' she said.

Holly is confident that her CPD log and record-keeping will easily meet [audit requirements](#) if she is randomly selected for auditing against the Board's CPD registration standard in May.

'We are continuously learning new skills in the workplace – we just need to make good use of our 'downtime' (no patients) to update [CPD logbooks](#),' she said.

Visit the [Registration](#) section on the Board's website for tip sheets on:

- [Staying on top of your CPD](#), and
- [Preparing yourself for audit](#).

## National examination

The National Examination Committee has completed its first phase of work and will soon begin the second phase of exam development.

Currently the development of the examination is being supported by a number of academics, clinical educators and practitioners from all three divisions of registration. In this next phase of work the committee will be looking to appoint additional content writers to contribute to the development of examination questions.

Examination questions are based on the Board's *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice*, which identify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to safely practise 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:

- applicants 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.

If you are interested in contributing to the development of examination questions, in the coming weeks please check the [Vacancies page](#) on the Board's website on how to submit your expression of interest.

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## National Scheme news

### New approach to international criminal history checks

As of 4 February 2015, National Boards and AHPRA have implemented a new procedure for checking international criminal history to provide greater public protection. This new approach requires [certain applicants and practitioners](#) to apply for an international criminal history check from an AHPRA-approved supplier. This approach aligns our international criminal history checks (ICHC) with our domestic history checks and aims to be fair and reasonable for practitioners. It also provides the Australian community with greater assurance by implementing additional safeguards to manage risks to the public from someone's international criminal history.

This approach was first announced in November last year, giving prospective applicants three months' notice of the change, and time to understand the new requirements before they take effect.

The new process for checking international criminal history aims to strike a balance between public safety and regulatory burden for practitioners.

For more information, please read the [media release](#) on the Board's website.

### Boards and AHPRA strengthen national drug screening

Mandatory hair testing will be routine for all registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment, under a screening protocol to be introduced by AHPRA and the National Boards.

Under the protocol, all health practitioners who have restrictions on their registration linked to past substance abuse will have routine hair testing in addition to urine testing.

Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug-taking history).

The protocol provides a clear framework across professions for AHPRA's advice to National Boards about the management of registered practitioners with drug-related impairment. It will make sure drug screening in the National Scheme is evidence based, effective and up to date.

National Boards will continue to make decisions about individual practitioners with impairment case by case, based on testing standards set out in the protocol.

The proposed new protocol is published on AHPRA's website on the [Monitoring and compliance](#) page.

### End to 'grandparenting' arrangements for registration

From 1 July 2015, arrangements that allowed some practitioners to become registered as their professions joined the National Scheme will expire.

Practitioners in the following professions who have not yet applied for registration will be affected:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice
- Chinese medicine (including acupuncturists, Chinese herbal medicine practitioners and Chinese herbal dispensers)
- medical radiation practice (including radiographers, radiation therapists and nuclear medicine technologists), and
- occupational therapy.

After 1 July 2015, the only way to become registered will be by meeting the National Boards' post-grandparenting registration standards.

#### Background

The professions listed above joined the National Scheme and became regulated on 1 July 2012; practitioners who were previously practising in these professions are able to register with the National Board through a *Grandparenting standard*.<sup>2</sup>

The intent of the grandparenting provisions was to ensure that practitioners who were legitimately practising before 1 July 2012 (particularly in those jurisdictions that did not require registration) were not unjustly disadvantaged because they have not completed an approved qualification – applicants with older Australian qualifications, overseas qualifications, or practice experience were able to obtain registration via this pathway.

#### The National Law

Under section 52 of the National Law, an individual is eligible to apply for general registration if they have successfully completed a qualification recognised under the National Law as an approved program of study, or if they hold an overseas qualification which is considered by the Board as equivalent to an approved program of study.

Only practitioners who are registered with the relevant National Board can practise using the protected titles or make claims to be qualified to practise a regulated health profession. Penalties exist if you pretend to be registered (or lead someone to believe that you are) when you are not. You can check whether you are registered on the AHPRA website using the *Check your health practitioner is registered* search.

#### More information

More information on the grandparenting standards for medical radiation practitioners is available in the [Registration standards](#) section of the Board website.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 303 of the National Law sets out the 'grandparenting' provisions for individuals to be eligible to apply for registration to the profession but who do not hold an academic qualification gained by completing an approved program of study.

## Security tip – keep your web browser updated

We are making changes to our websites to make sure that your information is kept safe.

From early April 2015, anyone using Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view our website is likely to experience difficulty accessing our web pages and our online services.

To avoid an interruption to service, we recommend you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our site please contact us to report your experience:

- Call 1300 419 495 Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

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## 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.