



SECOND MEETING OF THE MEDICAL BOARD OF AUSTRALIA 20 OCTOBER 2009

The second meeting of the Medical Board of Australia was held on 20 October 2009 at the Hilton Melbourne Airport. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

The main focus of the Board's second meeting was further discussion of the proposals that would be the subject of the consultation process to occur in late October and November about registration standards and specialist registration. Following the consultation period, the Board will finalise its position on registration proposals. At its December meeting the Board will complete this work in order to provide the proposals to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for decision.

The Board acknowledges the tight timetable for completion of the initial part of its work. The timetable is necessary so that all registrants can have advice ahead of the commencement day on 1 July 2010 of the new registration standards and requirements.

The Board agreed that it would undertake consultation in late October on proposals on the following matters:

- the five mandatory registration standards, namely standards on requirements for professional indemnity insurance, matters about the criminal history of applicants for registration, requirements for continuing professional development, requirements for English language skills and requirements in relation to recency of previous practice, and
- the specialties, fields of specialty practice, and related specialist titles that will apply for specialist registration.

The Board finalised arrangements for publication of a consultation paper dealing with these proposals on its website, and agreed on a process to notify key stakeholders. The consultation paper was posted on the Agency website (www.aphra.gov.au) on 27 October 2009. Comments on the consultation paper are due by 24 November 2009 and the Board urges stakeholders to meet this deadline so their comments can be properly considered.

The Board further considered proposals for how individual registrants will transition from their current registration to the new registration types set out in the proposed National Law. The Board finalised agreement on those matters which did not require Ministerial Council consideration. The Board noted that for the majority of registrants there was a clear type of registration to which they will transfer on 1 July 2010. Registrants will be advised by the Board of the type to which they will transfer well ahead of the commencement date.

The Board considered the important role of Postgraduate Medical Councils in accrediting intern training posts, and noted the increasing number of internships that will be required in the next few years. The Board noted that there will be a need for national standards for internships to be prepared by mid 2010 and approved by the end of 2010 to apply to internships commencing 2011. The Board agreed in principle that the current arrangements approved by State and Territory boards for existing internships should be honoured by the Board, that is existing interns who complete their internships by the end of 2010 will be accepted by the Board as qualified for general registration under the National Law. Also, the Board will be writing to the Postgraduate Medical Councils about funding arrangements to support the continuing accreditation of intern training posts for 2010.

The Board considered the current status of the COAG initiative to introduce a nationally consistent assessment process for International Medical Graduates (IMG). The Board supports the approach taken to date with respect to nationally consistent IMG assessment, and agreed that the new processes and pathways be adopted and applied under the national scheme.

The Board considered the future role of State and Territory boards under the national scheme, and agreed that future State and Territory boards for medicine should be either nine or twelve members depending on the size of the State/Territory.

The Board considered a number of administrative and financial matters, including its budget in 2010–2011 and possible fee structures. The Board will give further consideration to these matters at its November meeting.

The Board acknowledged the further work done in preparation for implementation of the national scheme by the existing State and Territory boards, its accrediting authority, AHPRA and the National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project team and looked forward to continuing to work with these groups over the coming months.

Dr Joanna Flynn
Chair, Medical Board of Australia

29 October 2009