



## Communiqué

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### Medical Board of Australia meeting: 16 October 2013

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

#### Renewal of registration for 2013/14

Medical practitioners with general, specialist or non-practising registration were due to renew their registration by 30 September 2013. Renewals received within one month of the registration expiry date incur an additional late fee, which reflects the cost of managing late renewals.

At mid October, 98.5% of medical practitioners have responded to the renewal campaign. More than 95% of registrants have renewed online.

Medical practitioners who have not yet renewed have received both email and hardcopy reminders. Under the National Law, practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the Register of Medical Practitioners. The Board encourages medical practitioners who wish to continue to practise and who are due to renew, to do so by 31 October 2013.

#### International criminal history checks

The National Law requires that all applicants for registration must have a criminal history check. Currently, applicants have an Australian criminal history check and must also sign a declaration disclosing their criminal history in all countries including Australia. The National Boards are currently consulting on processes for international criminal history checks to assess applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

The National Boards are working with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to refine the requirements for criminal history checks from jurisdictions outside Australia. The Boards first consulted on this issue in 2012.

The options are outlined in the consultation paper which is available on the Board's [website](#). The consultation closes on 31 October 2013. The current option aims to balance public protection with the need for responsive and timely application and assessment processes for health practitioners seeking registration in Australia.

#### Registration standards, codes and guidelines for review

The Board developed registration standards, codes and guidelines for the start of the National Scheme on 1 July 2010. These standards, codes and guidelines were scheduled for review at least every three years.

## Registration standards

All National Boards have registration standards that define the requirements that applicants for registration and registrants need to meet to be registered.

The National Boards will soon be undertaking public consultation on standards outlining:

- requirements about the **English language skills** necessary for an applicant for registration to be suitable for registration
- matters to be considered in deciding whether an individual's **criminal history** is relevant to the practice of medicine.

Preliminary consultation is due to commence soon for the registration standards outlining requirements for:

- professional indemnity insurance
- continuing professional development and
- the nature, extent, period and recency of any previous practice by applicants for registration.

The Board has also reviewed its registration standards for limited registration for medical practitioners and will consult on these standards and the draft guidelines on the 'Specialist pathway – short term training' at the same time as the other registration standards. Following preliminary consultation, the Board will release the standards for public consultation.

The registration standards have been reformatted and are written in more straight-forward language. The Board has made changes where it received feedback that elements in the standards have not worked as intended.

## Common guidelines

Following public consultation, the National Boards are now finalising the following common guidelines:

- revised *Guidelines for advertising*
- proposed *Social media policy*, and
- revised *Guidelines for mandatory notifications*.

The new guidelines will take effect from the date that they are published on the Board's website.

## Review of the pathways to registration

The Board recently consulted on proposed changes to the Competent Authority pathway and the Specialist pathway. The changes aim to streamline and simplify the assessment and registration of international medical graduates (IMGs).

The Board decided to proceed with the changes to the pathways and an implementation plan is now being developed. The Board will work with the Australian Medical Council (AMC), the Medical Colleges and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition to the new processes. The Board and the AMC are planning to host a forum for the Colleges and other stakeholders early next year.

## Upcoming vacancies for the state and territory Boards of the Medical Board of Australia

The Medical Board is supported by a Board in each state and territory. The National Board has formally delegated the necessary powers to the state and territory Boards, to make registration and notification decisions for individual medical practitioners, based on national policies and standards set by the National Board.

The required composition of the Boards is set out in the National Law. At least half, but not more than two thirds of the members of each Board must be practitioner members and at least two must be community members. The National Law requires that members of a state or territory Board are appointed by the Minister for that jurisdiction.

Many state and territory Board members were appointed on 1 July 2011 for a three year term – these terms are due to expire on 30 June 2014. All state and territory Boards will have multiple vacancies to fill in 2014 (except Queensland). The National Law requires that before a Minister can appoint a member of a state or territory Board, the vacancy must be publicly advertised. AHPRA assists the jurisdictions with the recruitment process and vacancies will be advertised early in 2014. Existing Board members are eligible to apply for re-appointment.

The Board encourages anyone interested in being appointed as a state or territory Board member to apply by responding to the advertisement in their state or territory. Appointments will be advertised on the AHPRA website at [www.ahpra.gov](http://www.ahpra.gov) under 'National Boards' as well as in major newspapers.

**Dr Joanna Flynn AM**  
**Chair, Medical Board of Australia**

23 October 2013