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From the Chair

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia has held two meetings this year and is preparing for a change in membership after the expiry of four members' third terms on the Board.

The Board has conducted a strategic planning session for 2018/19 and assessed its work for the previous period. The Board's plans are merged into the overall National Scheme¹ strategy with a focus on multi-professional work where possible.

We continue to work on reviews of the Board's shared *Code of conduct*. A round of preliminary consultation and then a longer round of public consultation will be conducted this year. The Board encourages all physiotherapists to engage with the process and provide feedback on proposed changes to this important document. The Code is an overarching framework that outlines the ethical and professional behaviours expected by the Board. After all, it is the document against which physiotherapists are measured should a complaint be made about them. While the Board recognises that physiotherapists might have various codes of conduct at their place of employment or through the APA, it is vital that they understand that it is the Board's *Code of conduct* that is the regulatory tool and the one that all physiotherapists are obliged to adhere to in order to maintain their registration.

The Board is also finalising a consultation paper which reviews and refines the existing, shared *Supervision guidelines*. Supervision can be required for various reasons – such as when a practitioner is returning to practice

after a break (and does not meet the *Recency of practice registration standard*); is making a substantial change to their scope of practice; has conditions imposed on their registration which require supervision, or; they hold limited registration for supervised practice, meaning that they are from overseas and are going through the Australian Physiotherapy Council's overseas assessment process.

Charles Flynn

Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia

Who does what in physiotherapy regulation – new diagram explains it

Being a registered physiotherapist means you have regulatory obligations you need to meet, all of which have the end goal of keeping patients safe.

Keeping the public safe takes more than the efforts of one organisation. Therefore it is important that the Board works with other regulators and stakeholders.

Physiotherapy regulators and stakeholders diagram

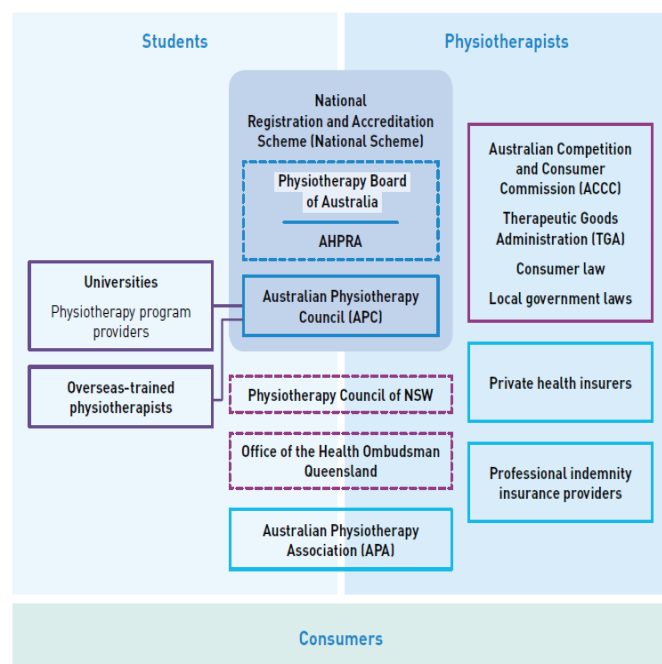
The National Law² provides a regulatory framework for the accreditation and registration of 15 National Boards, of which physiotherapy is one. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Boards work in a complex regulatory environment and the regulation of these practitioners is a shared responsibility.

To help physiotherapists and students understand who does what the Board has [published a diagram](#) of the different physiotherapy regulators and stakeholders in Australia.

1 The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

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

This diagram illustrates the Board's role in the regulation of physiotherapists and students under the National Scheme. It also shows a number of other regulators and stakeholders and how they relate to practitioners. A short summary of the functions and/or responsibilities of the different entities is also provided to clarify the functions of the Board and the functions of other regulators.



Key

Deal with complaints about the health, conduct or performance of registered physiotherapists and/or students.

You can download the full diagram by visiting the [news item page](#) on the Board's website.

Guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines released

AHPRA has released a guide for National Boards on endorsement for scheduled medicines.

In 2016 the Ministerial Council endorsed the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's *Guidance for National Boards: Applications to the Ministerial Council for approval of endorsements in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law* (the AHMAC Guidance).

The AHMAC Guidance endorsed by the Ministerial Council is available on the AHPRA [website](#).

To support the implementation of the Guidance, AHPRA has published a supporting *Guide for National Boards*. The AHPRA Guide supports National Boards when developing a submission to the Ministerial Council seeking approval of a new or amended endorsement in relation to scheduled medicines under section 14 of the National Law.

The AHPRA Guide may also help National Boards' stakeholders in understanding the complexity and rigor of the process of developing a proposal for endorsement for scheduled medicines for a profession, from concept development to Ministerial Council approval.

The AHPRA Guide is now available together with the AHMAC Guidance on the [Endorsement for scheduled medicines](#) section of the AHPRA website.

Both the AHMAC Guidance and the AHPRA Guide are two of the first steps in an important journey for the profession to consider whether it wishes to pursue prescribing rights. Of particular consideration is how this could occur without compromising the safety of the public, and whether it is a value proposition for the community.

Health ministers expect there to be a consistent approach applied across all regulated health professions, including physiotherapy. That means that the Board and the profession cannot productively 'go it alone' in developing rules, including accreditation and registration standards. Any changes require cross-professional consideration and agreement. The Board looks forward to continuing the conversations with stakeholders to discuss the many and varied issues around physiotherapist prescribing.

The Board's role is to enable an application for prescribing to be forwarded to health ministers and to make sure that all of the requirements of the Guidance have been followed by the profession when and if it makes an application. The Board's role is not to promote the profession but rather, to protect the public.

Quarterly registration data shows growth in the profession

The latest registration data report was released by the Board last month. It covers the period of 1 October–31 December 2017.

There are 31,276 registered physiotherapists as at that date, an increase of 702 or 2.29 per cent since the previous quarter ended 30 September. This increase includes new graduates registering for the first time.

For more data on the profession, including registration type by gender, age group and principal place of practice, visit the Board's [statistics page](#).

Board breakfast event for WA physiotherapists – please RSVP

The Board looks forward to seeing Western Australian physiotherapists at a breakfast to be held at the Royal Perth Hospital on the morning of Friday 27 April. If you haven't responded to the emailed invitation please do so well before the event. There'll be an opportunity to meet the Board and ask questions.

National Scheme news

Self-assessment tool launched to help practitioners and advertisers

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and National Boards have launched a self-assessment tool to help health practitioners, including physiotherapists, and other advertisers check and correct their advertising.

All registered physiotherapists need to make sure they meet their professional and legal obligations when advertising physiotherapy services. The tool was developed in consultation with National Boards and with feedback from AHPRA's Professions Reference Group.

The tool is easy to use and asks users to consider a number of questions about their advertising which can help them understand if it is in breach of the [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#), and in turn the National Law.

The self-assessment tool is the latest of a series of [advertising resources](#) for practitioners, healthcare providers and other advertisers of regulated health services to use to help them stay in line with the law.

This work is part of a broader strategy — the [Advertising compliance and enforcement strategy for the National Scheme](#) — which started last year. The strategy has met a number of its targets since its launch including clear, concise and helpful correspondence for when AHPRA receives a complaint about advertising and new resources such as:

- a [summary of advertising obligations](#)
- [frequently asked questions](#)
- tips on [words to be wary about](#), and
- all-professions examples of [compliant and non-compliant advertising](#).

The self-assessment tool is now available to use on the [check, correct and comply](#) section of the AHPRA website.

National regulation of paramedicine moves a step closer

The national regulation of paramedicine moves a step closer with the [appointment of the first Paramedicine Board of Australia](#).

The federal, state and territory health ministers made the announcement of the nine-person board at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council meeting held on 19 October 2017.

Paramedicine will be the first profession to be regulated under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme) since 2012.

Registration of paramedicine is due to start from late 2018. Paramedics will be able to register once and practise

anywhere in Australia. The title 'paramedic' will also become a 'protected title' – only people registered with the Board will be able to call themselves a paramedic.

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia, along with other National Boards, has contributed to the recent public consultation on the national standards that all paramedics will have to meet.

More information, including news about the [implementation of the regulation of paramedics](#) and the [newly appointed Board members](#), is available on the [Paramedicine Board of Australia's website](#).

New research framework launched to improve patient safety

In January, National Boards and AHPRA published a research framework to help transform health practitioner regulation to improve patient safety.

[A research framework for the National Scheme: Optimising our investment in research](#) sets out the research priorities and principles for National Boards and AHPRA to focus their research efforts.

The framework includes the priority research areas of: defining harms and risks related to the practice of regulated health professions, regulatory taxonomy or classification scheme, risk factors for complaints and/or poor practitioner performance, evidence for standards, codes and/or guidelines, evaluating regulatory interventions, stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, work readiness and workforce capacity and distribution.

It has been published to provide a solid base to facilitate risk-based research and evaluation activities, with a clear focus on translating the outcomes of research into initiatives that will inform regulatory policy development and decision-making to maximise the public benefit.

Update on the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy

In our last newsletter, we told you about the beginning of the National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA, the 15 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: 'Patient safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.'

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting, and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia, are co-Chairs of the health strategy group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group

publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

This work is happening in conjunction with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for AHPRA.

The next meeting of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group is scheduled for March 2018.

Local insights, National Scheme: State and territory summaries published

Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is operating across Australia, have been published.

Based on the AHPRA and National Boards annual report for 2016/17, the summaries are available online.

Information includes applications for registration by profession, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, profession and specialty.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received by profession, types of complaint, matters involving immediate action, monitoring and compliance, panels and tribunals, and statutory offence complaints.

A number of National Board summaries have been published and the rest will be available over coming months.

Copies of reports can be downloaded from the 2016-17 Annual Report [microsite](#).

For more information

- Visit the [Board's website](#) for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ.
- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration enquiries, call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 9275 9009 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Charles Flynn, Chair, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.

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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
ABN: 78 685 433 429

