



## Communiqué

---

### May 2019 meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The 112<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 31 May 2019 in Canberra.

The Registration and Notification Committee (RNC) also met on the same day as the May Board meeting.

The Board publishes this communiqué on our website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. At each meeting the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

#### Registrant engagement breakfast in Canberra

The Board hosted an information sharing breakfast for osteopaths at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)'s ACT office on Friday 31 May. The Board values the opportunity to engage with registrants and hear about the issues that are of most interest, including audit and mandatory reporting.

#### Capabilities for osteopathic practice (2019)

This month the Board will publish the revised *Capabilities for osteopathic practice* (the capabilities) with a six-month transition period until the date of commencement on 1 December 2019.

The Board will also be publishing supporting material in the form of FAQs and a short video to explain the use of the capabilities (also referred to as competencies or professional standards in some other professions) across the accreditation and education sectors and by supervisors and individual practitioners. There will be a news item and social media this month to alert you of the publication.

The Board wishes to thank all the accreditation council, osteopathy stakeholders, the project team and many registrants who have been involved in the development of this important document for the profession.

#### Audit in 2019

The Board will soon commence an audit of randomly selected osteopaths. Please make sure your address is up to date as letters will be sent by mail to those selected for audit.

The [audit page](#) on the Board's website has been updated with additional information, including:

- tips to help osteopaths prepare for the audit, and
- templates which can be used for:
  - planning, reviewing and evaluating your continuing professional development (CPD) activities
  - statement of professional indemnity insurance from your employer, and
  - statement of service or curriculum vitae for recency of practice.

#### Company fined \$30,600 for unlawful advertising

Practitioners are reminded to be truthful in advertising their services after a Sydney company was convicted of 10 charges and fined \$30,600 for unlawful advertising.

The Running Clinic (Australia) Pty Ltd (formerly trading as the Heel Clinic), was convicted and fined for advertising offences under the National Law. It was fined \$30,600 and ordered to pay AHPRA's costs of \$8,000.

AHPRA filed 10 charges against the company. It alleged that advertising claims on The Running Clinic's websites and Facebook account contained false, misleading and deceptive claims about podiatry services that were likely to create an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment.

AHPRA first raised the unlawful advertising with the company in 2015 and, while minor changes were made, it failed to significantly rectify the issues.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher welcomed the court outcome.

‘Consumers have a right to expect that all registered health practitioners are truthful when advertising their services. This court outcome sends a clear message to anyone advertising a regulated health service that AHPRA will act if they break the law.’ he said

Information about your advertising obligations is available on the Board’s [website](#).

### **Practitioners’ responsibility to support public health programs**

Australia’s health regulators have reminded health practitioners about their responsibility to support public health programs, including vaccination.

Regulators have spoken out to support public safety, given mounting concerns about a five-year high in measles cases and an early spike in flu cases this year.

AHPRA and the National Boards for 16 professions have urged more than 740,000 registered health practitioners to take seriously their responsibilities for public health, including by helping patients to be protected from preventable illnesses.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher reminded practitioners that supporting public health programs, including vaccination and immunisation, and not promoting anti-vaccination views were regulatory responsibilities.

‘Registered health practitioners have a regulatory responsibility to support patients to understand the evidence-based information available,’ Mr Fletcher said.

National Boards set codes, standards and guidelines, including about protecting and promoting the health of individuals and the community, which they expect registered health practitioners to meet.

‘Practitioners are of course entitled to hold personal beliefs, but they must ensure that they do not contradict or counter public health campaigns, including about the efficacy or safety of public health initiatives,’ he said.

If practitioners do not comply and meet the professional standards set by their National Board, regulators can and do take action.

National Boards and AHPRA have taken action to manage risk to the public, in response to a number of concerns raised about practitioners (including medical practitioners, nurses and chiropractors) who have advocated against evidence-based vaccination programs. This has included restricting practitioners’ practice pending further investigation, when there was a serious risk to the public.

Osteopaths can read the [media release](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **AHPRA launches WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation**

In April, AHPRA officially launched as a designated World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation in the Western Pacific Region.

AHPRA, working in partnership with the National Boards, joins a list of over 800 institutions in more than 80 countries supporting WHO programs in areas such as nursing development, communicable diseases, mental health, chronic diseases and health technologies.

Strengthening the regulation of the health workforce is an important part of the WHO’s global strategy to build the human resources needed for access to safe and quality healthcare across the world.

As a designated WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Regulation, we’re excited by the opportunity to share expertise and promote dialogue that collectively improves the standard of regulatory practice within the WHO Western Pacific Region. We know that the global health workforce crosses country borders and is mobile, including in Australia where thousands of overseas-qualified practitioners are registered and take up practice here. It’s important that regulators from different countries work together to set the standards for practitioner education, competence and conduct necessary for the global health workforce to deliver safe and reliable healthcare.

As a WHO collaborating centre AHPRA will:

- help WHO in providing technical support to strengthen health workforce regulatory systems in member states
- support WHO in promoting the adoption of contemporary regulatory approaches to health workforce regulation, and
- strengthen the capacity, skills and knowledge of regulators in member states under WHO's guidance.

### Information Publications Scheme – promoting accessibility of our information

From 1 June 2019, AHPRA and National Boards are required to comply with the Information Publication Scheme (IPS) established under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth). The IPS promotes openness and transparency and aims to reduce the number of Freedom of Information applications through the proactive publication of information. This requires that certain information and documents be made publicly available.

AHPRA and National Boards have worked together to implement the IPS and information has been recently published about it on the [AHPRA website](#).

### Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to receive up to date information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



### Keeping in touch with the Board

The Board publishes a range of information and resources about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on their website at [www.osteopathyboard.gov.au](http://www.osteopathyboard.gov.au). Osteopaths are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting their profession.

For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme please refer to the information published on [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au). Alternatively, contact AHPRA by an [online enquiry form](#) or phone 1300 419 495.

### Dr Nikole Grbin (Osteopath)

Chair

Osteopathy Board of Australia

11 June 2019