



Communiqué

9 September 2014

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) met on 29 August 2014 in Melbourne.

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting

The Board meeting was held to coincide with the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting.

The combined meeting encourages learning through sharing ideas, innovation and networking. The goal is to help us to better understand and respond to our wider regulatory environment.

The combined meeting brings together over 350 people from across the National Scheme including some New Zealand counterparts. The discussion covered a range of topics, including the consumer experience of regulation, multi-profession approaches to regulation, the NRAS three-year review (with an address and workshops led by Kim Snowball the independent reviewer) and co-regulatory models (with a presentation by the new Queensland Health Ombudsman).

Registration fees

The Board has announced the national registration fee for pharmacists for 2014/15 will remain the same as the previous year at \$317. It will cover the registration period for most pharmacists of 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2015 and take effect from 9 September. The schedule of fees is published on the Board's [website](#).

The regulation of pharmacists is funded solely by registrant fees and there is no cross subsidisation between professions that are regulated in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

More detailed information about the Board's financial operations will be outlined in the Health Profession Agreement between the Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) for 2014/15, which will be published on the website soon. This agreement sets out the partnership between the Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide to support the Board to regulate pharmacy.

Preventing avoidable mistakes

Notifications (complaints) about pharmacists regarding a range of issues are received by the Board and considered by its Notifications Committee. Information on the range of issues giving rise to notifications is published in the AHPRA and National Boards annual report published on the AHPRA [website](#).

It has become apparent during the consideration of a number of notifications that a lack of, or insufficient counselling on medication supplied by pharmacists has been a contributing factor to the issues leading to some of the notifications.

The Board reminds pharmacists of their obligations regarding the provision of counselling to patients as outlined in *Guideline 8 Counselling patients about prescribed medicines* published in the *Guidelines for dispensing of medicines* available on the Board's [website](#). In addition to providing patients with important information to aid compliance with their medication, counselling on the medication being supplied serves as an opportunity to complete a final check of whether the correct medication is being supplied to the patient in accordance with the prescriber's instructions, thus minimising the occurrence of dispensing errors.

New website homepage designs

New homepage designs for the websites of National Boards and AHPRA have been launched. Work on the review and improvement of the sites will continue over the next twelve months, and will include extensive consultation with a range of user groups, including practitioners, employers and members of the community. Website users are invited to complete a [survey](#) about their experience in using the websites.

Continuing professional development

The current continuing professional development period for pharmacists ends on 30 September 2014. Between the period 1 October 2013 and 30 September 2014, pharmacists are required to have achieved at least 40 CPD credits in accordance with the current [Continuing professional development registration standard](#) (CPD registration standard) and [Guidelines on continuing professional development](#) (CPD guidelines).

The review of the current CPD standard and CPD guidelines are part of the current review of registration standards, codes and guidelines. While consultation occurs, there is no change to the current requirement for pharmacists to achieve 40 CPD credits annually. If any change to the annual CPD requirement for pharmacists is supported by feedback to the Board's consultation on registration standards and guidelines, details will be published in the revised registration standard approved by Ministerial Council and guidelines approved by the Board.

The Board has further information regarding the CPD requirements in the form of answers to [frequently asked questions](#) and other information published on the Board's [website](#).

National Return and Disposal of Unwanted Medicines

The Board supports the RUM project for the return of unwanted medicines and considers this to be an important service to promote safety of the public in relation to their medicines. The Board notes that there have been reports of a shortage of RUM bins and urges pharmacists to ensure their efficient use. This may be achieved by compressing bulky packaging. Further information regarding the RUM project can be found on the [Return Unwanted Medicines website](#).

Registration renewal

Online renewal of registration will be available soon. Pharmacists should ensure their contact details provided to AHPRA, including email, are current as reminders when registration renewal is due. Details can be updated via the login section of the Board's website which is located on the top right hand corner of the [homepage](#). Pharmacists should look for reminders from AHPRA as confirmation that online renewal is open.

Stephen Marty
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
9 September 2014

[The Pharmacy Board of Australia](#) is the regulator of pharmacists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent pharmacists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for pharmacists and managing notifications (complaints) about pharmacists and pharmacy students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's pharmacists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and QLD which have co-regulatory arrangements.*