



Communiqué

May 2012 Meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The 33rd meeting of the Osteopathy Board of Australia was held in Melbourne on 24 May 2012. The Board is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Qualifications for general registration

One of the objectives of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners. The National Law sets out the roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority, the Australian and New Zealand Osteopathic Council (ANZOC), in relation to the accreditation and approval of education providers and programs of study for the osteopathy profession. ANZOC advised the Board that in April 2012 it accredited the Bachelor of Clinical Sciences (Double Major in Osteopathic Studies and Human Structure and Function) and the Master of Osteopathic Medicine at Southern Cross University for a period of 5 years.

The Board considered the ANZOC report on its accreditation of the osteopathy programs at the Southern Cross University and approved the Bachelor of Clinical Sciences (Double Major in Osteopathic Studies and Human Structure and Function) and the Master of Osteopathic Medicine, as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration in the osteopathy profession for a period 5 March 2012 to 31 December 2016. The current approved programs of study are published on the Board's website under *Accreditation*: www.osteopathyboard.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx

Students changing universities

The Board will develop a *Fact Sheet* on its qualification requirements for current students. As stated in the latest newsletter from the Board in March 2012, all the Board's approved programs of study require **both** a Bachelor **and** Masters degree from the **same university**. If a current or future osteopathy student changes institutions part-way through their studies (even if recognition of prior learning is granted by the university), they may not have an approved qualification. If so, when they apply for general registration the Board may have to determine whether they hold a qualification which is substantially equivalent, or based on similar competencies, to an approved qualification; and this may take extra time to investigate and determine. The *Fact Sheet* will be available in July.

Capabilities for Experienced Osteopathic Practice project

The Board announced that Victoria University is the successful tenderer for the project to develop the *Capabilities for Experienced Osteopathic Practice*. This was decided after receipt of submissions by the Board in March 2012 and a selection process. The Board will let the profession know of the outcome of the project later in 2012.

Upcoming consultations

The National Law requires the Board to undertake wide-ranging consultation on the content of proposed registration standards, codes or guidelines. In the second half of the year, the Board expects to release draft guidelines for wide-ranging consultations on the following:

- competent authority pathway for overseas trained osteopaths

- sexual boundaries, and
- informed consent.

Endorsement for acupuncture for registered osteopaths

The National law set out that that from 1 July 2012 the title of 'acupuncturist' is protected. On 1 July 2012, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia will be the authority responsible for registering Chinese medicine practitioners. Acupuncture is a division of the Chinese medicine profession.

Only registered Chinese medicine practitioners or practitioners whose registration has been endorsed as being qualified to practice acupuncture may call themselves, hold themselves out as being qualified as, acupuncturists.

Osteopaths who wish to use the title 'acupuncturist' must be registered by the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia. Endorsement for acupuncture is not yet available from the Osteopathy Board of Australia (similarly to a number of Boards in the National Accreditation and Registration Scheme). Osteopaths who transitioned under the former Osteopaths Registration Board of Victoria are automatically endorsed.

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia does have provision for 'grandparenting', and osteopaths can apply now in preparation for 1 July 2012 with that Board.

Under the National Law, it is not an offence for practitioners to perform acupuncture as long as they do not breach the provisions in the National Law around the use of the title 'acupuncturist'.

A *Fact Sheet* to further explain endorsement requirements will be available at the Osteopathy Board's website in June.

All Boards review of the English Language Skills Registration Standards

The National Boards have committed to reviewing their registration standards at least every three years. By mid 2013, the National Scheme will be three years old, which will trigger a review of the standards that have been in place since the start of the scheme. In preparation, National Boards and AHPRA have commissioned research on English language skills testing, including the scope of exemptions from testing requirements. This research will inform the review of English Language Skills Registration Standards in 2013. The research evidence and other information from the review will be shared with the four professions joining the Scheme on 1 July 2012 so that they can consider any implications for their registration standards. The existing standard was based on the approach of state and territory registration boards before July 2010, and informed by the consultation process that supported its development. The National Boards will consult on any changes to the English language skills registration standard in 2013.

Information for osteopaths

The Board has extensive information published at www.osteopathyboard.gov.au It is the responsibility of all osteopaths to be familiar with publications and legislation, and the Board encourages all osteopaths to regularly check the website for changes which are reported under the *News* tab.

Dr Robert Fendall
Chair
Osteopathy Board of Australia
5 June 2012