

## Media release

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10 November 2016

### Annual Report profiles Board's work to protect the public in 2015/16

The Medical Board of Australia progressed three major initiatives in 2015/16 to help improve public safety, according to information published by AHPRA today in its [2015/16 annual report](#).

The 2015/16 annual report by AHPRA and the national health practitioner boards is a comprehensive record of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016.

'Over the past year, we focused on cosmetic procedures, doctors' health and revalidation – on top of our daily work with AHPRA to improve our existing processes and systems,' said Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia.

The Board issued [Guidelines for medical practitioners who perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures](#) in May 2016, and funded a \$2 million national network of health services for doctors and students.

'Our core priority will always be patient safety, but this also involves making sure that medical practitioners and students have access to the services they need to maintain their own health and well-being,' Dr Flynn said.

The Board also expanded its work to ensure that doctors keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date, by publishing international research and an interim report from an expert advisory group, and launching an extensive consultation with the profession and community [about revalidation](#).

In total, nine new or revised codes and guidelines were approved or took effect during 2015/16, which are outlined in the report. The Board also trialled a new way of organising committee meetings to enable Board members to quickly conduct a preliminary assessment of notifications.

'There has also been an increase in notifications this year,' Dr Flynn said. 'We know how important it is to assess and manage these quickly, so we can close less complex matters early and focus on addressing concerns that pose the greatest potential risk to the public.'

#### More highlights of the past year include:

- **More registered medical practitioners:** On 30 June 2016, there were 107,179 registered medical practitioners across Australia, an increase of 3.92% from the previous year. Medical practitioners made up 16.3% of all registered health practitioners in the National Scheme.
- **More health practitioners overall:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 across the 14 regulated professions than there were last year, with 657,621 health practitioners registered nationally. Student registrations increased by more than 11,000 registrants year-on-year, totalling 153,710.
- **A simplified renewal process:** Online registration renewals reached a new high across all professions – with more than 98% of all registrants renewing online and on time. Online renewal makes it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.

- **A substantial increase in medical practitioners holding provisional registration:** Of the total medical practitioners, 5,408 held provisional registration – 711 more than last year. Most of these are graduates in their first post-graduate year, in an accredited intern position while they progress toward eligibility for general registration.
- **An increase in student registrations:** There was a 5.8% increase in the number of registered medical students year on year, with 19,760 registrants in this category on 30 June 2016.
- **Greater awareness of the National Scheme:** A nationwide campaign aimed at employers, practitioners and the general public rolled out across social media and in print advertising.
- **Growth in notifications across all professions:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year across all professions, an increase of 19.7% nationally.
- **Increase in new notifications about medical practitioners:** In 2015/16, AHPRA received 5,371 notifications nationally about medical practitioners (including data from the Health Professional Councils Authority (HPCA) in NSW). This represents an annual increase of 18.3% from the previous year, much of which can be attributed to an increase in matters referred to AHPRA in Queensland by the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).
- **Most complaints about medical practitioners related to clinical care:** 51.2% of complaints lodged about medical practitioners related to clinical care; 9.3% were medication issues and 8.8% were about communication. (Data includes HPCA in NSW.)
- **Greater awareness around mandatory notifications:** There was a 23% increase in mandatory notifications in 2015/16 from the previous year across all health professions, with 272 made about medical practitioners (up from 212 in 2014/15).
- **More than half of all notifications nationwide were about medical practitioners:** This represented 52% of all notifications received by AHPRA (excluding HPCA) in 2015/16, consistent with previous years.
- **15% of all statutory offence matters were about medical practitioners:** AHPRA received 202 new complaints about possible statutory offences by medical practitioners in the past year. Almost all new matters related to the use of protected titles or advertising concerns.

For more data and information relating to the Medical Board of Australia in 2015/16, please see [www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016). The report provides a nationwide snapshot of the work of AHPRA and the Boards and highlights a multi-profession approach to risk-based regulation, with a clear focus on ensuring that Australians have a safe and competent health workforce.

‘The regulation of more than 660,000 registered health practitioners across 14 health professions and eight states and territories is an important task,’ said AHPRA CEO Mr Martin Fletcher. ‘There are many things to consider in regulation – but there is only one main focus - public safety.’

Supplementary tables that break down data across categories such as registrations, notifications, statutory offences, tribunals and appeals, and monitoring and compliance can also be found on the annual report website.

In the coming months, AHPRA and the National Boards will also publish summaries of our work regulating health practitioners in every state and territory, which will be released in late 2016. Expanded, profession-specific summaries will also be released and progressively published from early 2017.

#### *For more information*

- Visit [www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/annualreport/2016)
- For online enquiries visit [www.ahpra.gov.au/enquiry](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/enquiry)
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