



Aboriginal and Torres Strait
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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Media release

25 October 2013

English language skills and criminal history standards under review

National Boards are asking the community and health practitioners to have their say on the standards registered health practitioners must meet for English language skills and criminal history.

Under the National Law, the 14 National Boards in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) set registration standards that all registered health practitioners must meet. This consultation is part of a scheduled review of the registration standards, after three years experience with the National Scheme.

The English language skills registration standard sets minimum requirements for practitioners to make sure they can communicate effectively and provide safe care to the Australian community.

The criminal history registration standard sets out what National Boards will consider when deciding whether a health practitioner's criminal history is relevant to their practice of their profession. The National Law determines what information practitioners must declare to Boards about their criminal history.

The National Boards want to hear from the public and health practitioners to get their views.

'Our job in setting standards is to balance public safety with workforce issues,' a spokeswoman for the National Boards said.

'We think every Australian who sees or is a registered health practitioner will have ideas about the right balance between these priorities on these two important issues.'

To support evidence-based policy setting, the National Boards commissioned research on English language skills for health professionals. A summary of the research is published in the consultation paper. The research was one of several information sources the National Boards considered when revising the English language registration standard, along with three years practical experience of the current regulatory requirement, historical approaches and the approaches of comparable jurisdictions.

The consultation paper is available on the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia website](#) under *Current consultations*.

For more information

- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200