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Chair's message

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia's (the National Board) newsletter.

Since our profession's transition into the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) on 1 July 2012, the Board has undertaken detailed strategic work and business planning to ensure delivery of its responsibilities under the National Law.¹ This includes establishing committees to exercise delegated functions and to ensure good governance and accountability for the Board's activities.

As registration and notification processes are being further developed as we progress through the initial high workload, it is important for practitioners to maintain their understanding of the Board's registration standards, codes and guidelines.

This newsletter provides regular updates and draws attention to important guidance documents for meeting standards of professional practice.

Along with another Board member, I recently attended a national Chinese medicine conference. The conference included an excellent speech by the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon. David Davis, MLC. Minister Davis spoke of the importance of Chinese medicine history as a solid foundation for professional practice but reminded us of the characteristics of a strong and mature profession in the modern world.

A strong and mature profession has a commitment to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Its members engage in self-reflection and are committed to continuing professional development. He said a strong research

community is fundamental to a strong and vibrant profession.

Members of an honoured health profession place the patient at the centre of every decision they make. They understand and defend patient rights including, relevant to us currently:

- a right to know exactly what is in any herbal formulae they ingest, and
- a right to have their health professionals able to collaborate and communicate effectively.

In the context of the new regulatory scheme, he reminded us that it is not the job of the Chinese Medicine Board to promote the interests of the profession. This is the job of the professional associations.

He then spoke about where Chinese medicine is currently with its representation and expressed that a strong and mature profession:

- presents a unified and authoritative voice
- has respectful and collaborative relationships with other professions, and
- understands and respects the authority of its registration board.

I look forward to speaking with some of you in Sydney on 23 June – [see the invitation below.](#)

Professor Charlie Xue

Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia



¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

Sydney forum invitation for practitioners and students of Chinese medicine – 23 June 2014

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia invites practitioners and students of Chinese medicine to attend an information forum being held at University of Technology, Sydney on Monday 23 June 2014.

It is essential to RSVP by **20 June** as numbers are limited.

Further information, including how to RSVP, is available on the website under the [News](#) tab.

Welcome to the new community member of the Board

In May the Board warmly welcomed its newly appointed community member, Dr Anne Fletcher, to her first meeting of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia. Anne has worked in a range of roles including medical researcher, senior executive and principal consultant in a life sciences consultancy. She has served on the boards of the Victorian Cancer Agency, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, the CRC for Vaccine Technology, the Australian and New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion, the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and HeartKids Australia. Her involvement in communities has been diverse, encompassing local community activities, professional societies, national community and volunteer-based organisations. Anne brings to the Chinese Medicine Board a scientific approach, a sound knowledge of governance and an understanding of community values, opinions and expectations.

2013/14 Health Profession Agreement

Under the National Law, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia and AHPRA work in partnership to implement the National Scheme, each with specific roles, powers and responsibilities set down in the National Law.

The guiding principles of the National Law require the National Scheme to operate in a 'transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way'; and for registration fees to be reasonable '...having regard to the efficient and effective operation of the scheme'.

Each year the Board and AHPRA publish a health profession agreement that details the services provided by AHPRA that enable the Board to carry out its functions under the National Law.

The Board's *2013/14 Health Profession Agreement* has been released and can be accessed under the [About us](#) tab on our website

Publications and guidelines from the Board

Revised code of conduct, guidelines and new social media policy now in effect

Revised guidelines and codes of conduct, and a new social media policy, containing important information for all registered health practitioners have recently been released. Chinese medicine practitioners need to familiarise themselves with this guidance to ensure their practice meets Board expectations from mid-March onward.

The documents were released by the National Boards regulating registered health practitioners in Australia through the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The documents are:

- revised *Code of conduct*
- revised *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services*
- revised *Guidelines for mandatory notifications*, and
- a new *Social media policy*.

The documents are the result of a scheduled review three years into the National Scheme and are the first set of revised documents to be released this year, with more to come later in 2014.

You can view the documents under [Codes and guidelines](#) on the Board's website.

Further information is available in FAQs published at the [FAQ page](#).

Give us your feedback on draft guidelines

Community and health practitioner feedback is sought on:

1. Draft *Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice*. Consultation is open until **23 July 2014**.
2. Draft *Supervision guidelines for Chinese medicine practitioners*. Consultation is open until **31 July 2014**.

You can find the consultation documents under the [Consultations](#) tab on our website.

Registration matters

Snapshot of the profession

The National Board's latest quarterly data update (March 2014) shows there are 4,219 registered Chinese medicine practitioners in Australia, of whom 122 are non-practising. Table 1 shows practitioner numbers by type and by state and territory.

Table 1 – Chinese medicine practitioners: registration type and subtype by state

Chinese Medicine Practitioner	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
General	62	1,690	14	782	162	35	1,124	213	15	4,097
Limited (Total of Sub Types)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teaching or Research	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Practising	2	17	0	20	1	-	56	2	24	122
Total Practitioners	64	1,707	14	802	163	35	1,180	215	39	4,219

Table 2 shows registration numbers by division, with by far the largest number of registrants practising both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine (2,002). There are 1,615 registrants practising solely as acupuncturists.

Table 2 – Chinese medicine practitioners: registration division(s)

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
Acupuncturist	23	413	10	545	91	21	423	85	4	1,615
Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Dispensing	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	5
Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Dispensing and Chinese Herbal Medicine	7	349	-	39	7	1	59	20	1	483
Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Medicine	34	877	4	207	60	12	670	106	32	2,002
Chinese Herbal Dispensing	-	34	-	1	1	-	3	2	-	41
Chinese Herbal Dispensing and Chinese Herbal Medicine	-	11	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	14
Chinese Herbal Medicine	-	22	-	7	1	1	24	2	2	59
Total	64	1,707	14	802	163	35	1,180	215	39	4,219

For further registration data, visit the [About→Statistics](#) section of the Board's website.

National Scheme news

First National Law offence prosecution results in guilty verdict

The first prosecution of an offence under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law has resulted in a guilty verdict and the accused person ordered to pay fines totalling \$20,000.

The Magistrates Court of WA handed down judgment in a criminal matter being prosecuted by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) against Ms Jayne Walton of Western Australia. Ms Walton, who pleaded guilty to all charges, was found guilty of using the title 'psychologist' and claiming to be a registered psychologist when she had not been registered for a number of years, in breach of the National Law.

The National Law protects the public by ensuring that only registered health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified are able to use **protected titles**. The law allows for penalties for falsely using protected titles or holding yourself out to be a registered practitioner when you are not. The maximum penalty that a court may impose is \$30,000 (in the case of an individual) or \$60,000 (in the case of a body corporate).

The finding is an important milestone in the work of the National Scheme, which regulates 605,000 registered health practitioners across 14 professions. All registered health practitioners appear on the national register of practitioners, which is a searchable list that is accessible on the [AHPRA website](#). If a person does not appear on the register, they are not registered to practise in a regulated health profession in Australia.

Protected titles for Chinese medicine

Protected titles for Chinese medicine practitioners under the National Law are:

- Chinese medicine practitioner
- Chinese herbal dispenser
- Chinese herbal medicine practitioner
- Oriental medicine practitioner, and
- acupuncturist.

Review of the National Scheme

Australia's health ministers have announced the terms of reference for the review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. In March 2008, when Commonwealth and state and territory governments all signed the agreement which underpins the scheme, they agreed that it should be reviewed after three years of operation. The review will be conducted independently of AHPRA and the National Boards. It will examine whether the scheme is meeting the objectives set out in the National Law and will consider benefits and costs.

The scheme is still developing and improving and in addition to workforce mobility, the two major objectives are to protect the public by ensuring that only practitioners who are suitably trained are registered and to facilitate access to health services in the public interest. The scheme is funded by practitioners' annual registration fees.

Accountability is one of the guiding principles in the legislation governing the scheme. We welcome this opportunity to reflect on what has been delivered, what is working well, what needs further work and whether the benefits are proportionate to the costs of the scheme.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au for news about the profession, information on the National Scheme and for registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Read the National Board Communiqué each month on the website: these publications inform everyone of the decisions made at the Board's monthly meeting.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the Enquiries link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Prof. Charlie Xue, Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

