



**PHYSIOTHERAPISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
NEWSLETTER APRIL 2007**

Members of the Board

Ms Pippa Tessmann, Chair
Ms Margaret Seccafien
Ms Karin Underwood
Mr Michael Kokinos
Ms Beth Walker

Board Support

Ms Jill Huck	Registrar
Ms Cate Lynch	Policy & Research
Ms Julie Burrows	Registrations
Ms Samantha Bullen	Complaints

Message from the Chair

The Registration Board has been very involved with submissions regarding national registration through the Australian Physiotherapy Council, (formerly AECOP), & with the Chairs of all the Territory Boards, by direct submission. It is certainly an interesting if lengthy process, & I'm optimistic that by July 2008 when national registration for nine health professions is due to be introduced, we will have a system in place that works well for us all. It will certainly be much easier for us all to attend courses & conferences interstate & to travel with sports teams & work across the border in remote locations without having to register in that state.

DON'T FORGET YOU MUST BE REGISTERED IN THE STATE THAT YOU ARE WORKING IN IF YOU ARE TRAVELING INTERSTATE WITH ATHLETES, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE ONLY TREATING TERRITORY ATHLETES, & IF THERE IS A PRACTICAL COMPONENT TO A COURSE OR CONFERENCE YOU WILL ALSO REQUIRE TEMPORARY REGISTRATION IN THAT STATE, UNTIL WE HAVE A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL REGISTRATION IN PLACE.

A big thank you to all registrants who completed our survey, it was great to receive such positive feedback.

*Best regards
Pippa Tessmann*

Board Website

Previous Newsletters have indicated that a Board website was under development.

The website is now "live" and available at the following address:

<http://www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards>

Access to the web pages for all Health Registration Boards is through this common pathway. Once you are at the Health Professions Licensing Authority homepage, click on the link to *Physiotherapists Board* to go to the website.

The website provides access to the following:

- Applications for registration;
- Applications for renewal of registration;
- Policies and Guidelines;
- *Health Practitioners Act*;
- Board contact details, and
- The register of physiotherapists (at a given date).

As new policies are developed or existing policies are updated they are posted to the Board's website. The newsletter is also available at the website.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) response to proposal for a national registration and accreditation system

As advised in the last newsletter, one of the recommendations of last year's Productivity Commission Research Report into Australia's Health Workforce, was to establish a national system for registering health professionals and accrediting health training programs.

Since then, the recommendation has been supported by COAG and agreement was reached to move towards establishing a national system, for commencement on 1 July 2008. The first step has been to establish the model for the national system. This has been in development over the past few months through several drafts and a variety of consultation methods. The Board has provided input through the Australian Physiotherapy Council and also through the Northern Territory Board Chairs Forum, both of which have made submissions on each of the key consultation documents.

The final model is to be considered at the next COAG meeting on 13 April 2007. Further details on progress towards the national system will be included in the next newsletter.

Registration requirements for visiting physiotherapists

Last year the Board adopted a new policy on visiting physiotherapists, recognising that from time to time, physiotherapists may travel to the Northern Territory to undertake short-term locums, participate in

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professional development forums or accompanying sporting teams.

In the interest of reducing the financial burden on those physiotherapists who will only be in the Northern Territory for a very short time, the Board may waive the usual registration fee.

A request for fee waiver must be in writing and forwarded with the application for registration. Each request will be assessed against the Board's Waiver of Fees policy and considered on an individual basis.

The new policy is available at the Board's website.

Results of the Board's 2006 Client Satisfaction Survey

Physiotherapists renewing their registration last year will be aware that the Board sought your views on the quality of registration services provided. Thank you to the 61 physiotherapists who responded. The Board randomly selected a survey respondent for one year's free registration. Congratulations to Susan Gibson.

Over 60% of respondents had contact with Board staff while waiting for their application to be processed, either to provide further information required or to check progress. There was a 97% satisfaction rate with the service provided.

The survey results indicate that the overwhelming majority of physiotherapists understand the role of the Board and most appreciate the policy updates and other information provided in the newsletter. A smaller group would welcome information sessions on professional regulation issues and activity.

The survey also shows that many physiotherapists seek information from Board staff on a range of matters from registration, practice issues and board policies. 97% of those seeking information from staff were satisfied with the service provided.

Know your Act

The Board urges all physiotherapists to familiarise themselves and understand the legislation that regulates their practise. Each edition of the Newsletter contains extracts from the Act with an explanation to assist this understanding.

Section 117. Employer notice of misconduct or incompetence.

If a person who employs a health practitioner terminates or suspends the health practitioner's employment because of alleged or actual misconduct or incompetence to practise, the person must provide a written report of the circumstances of the termination or suspension to the relevant Board and to the health practitioner.

The Board is concerned that employers may not be aware of this provision. An employer of a registered health practitioner **must** notify the Board if the practitioner's employment is terminated or suspended because of alleged or actual misconduct or incompetence.

Section 114. Employer notice relating to fitness to practise

If a person who employs a health practitioner considers that the health practitioner has a mental or physical incapacity that has resulted in or is likely to result in an incapacity that seriously impairs or may seriously impair the health practitioner's ability to practice, he or she **may** notify the relevant Board of that fact.

Section 105. Notifying Board of civil claims

Health practitioners **must**, within 14 days:

- after proceedings are commenced
- claims are withdrawn
- claims settled, or
- court or other tribunal makes an order

in respect of the proceedings claiming damages or other compensation for alleged negligence in health care practice against the health practitioner, give the relevant Board notice of the proceedings including particulars of the claim.

Registration Statistics

As at the 15 March 2007 there were 146 physiotherapists registered in the Northern Territory.

Complaints

Currently there are no matters before the Board.

Changed Your Name Or Address Recently?

Section 46 of the Act states that a practitioner must, within 30 days of changing his or her name, personal or business address, forward this information to the Board. This is important because the Board needs to have your current address to ensure that the application to renew annual registration is received and that you receive Newsletters and other information from the Board relevant to practising in the Northern Territory. Also from time to time a practitioner may be involved in professional conduct matters or be identified as a witness in a professional conduct matter. The Board needs your address.

Contact details

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