

The Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania

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Newsletter

December 2006

The Board

In May 2006 the terms of former Board Chair Ms Julia Drew and member Ms Margaret Murray concluded as they were not eligible for re-appointment, both having served two terms. The Board would like to thank them for their valuable contributions over the past six years. Ms Margaret Archer (physiotherapist) and Ms Simone Bingham (consumer representative) have been appointed to the Board to fill the two vacancies.

Your Board Members are:

Physiotherapists:

- Mr Paul Shinkfield (Chair)
- Ms Margaret Archer
- Ms Janet Millner

Consumer Representatives

- Mr Malcolm Upston
- Ms Simone Bingham

Renewal of Registration

Registration fees for 2007 are due and payable by 31 January 2007. Physiotherapists who do not register by this date will incur a late payment penalty of \$50 and run the risk of jeopardising their professional indemnity insurance cover.

The re registration fee for 2007 is **\$150**. The Board is now registered as a BPay recipient to enable physiotherapists to pay their registration promptly over the internet or via telephone banking with their own bank. BPay information is included on the registration renewal notice. Payment may also be made by cheque or money order through the post, or by cash in person at the Board office.

Please renew your registration ASAP!

Recency of Practice

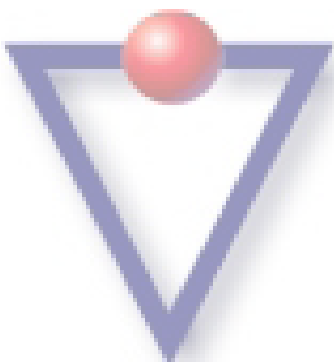
The Physiotherapists Registration Act requires that the Board must not re-register a physiotherapist who has not actively practised physiotherapy in the previous five years. The Board has interpreted this requirement to mean that a physiotherapist must have practised for at least 1000 hours over that period. Physiotherapists who are unable to meet this requirement may have their competency assessed by the Recency of Practice Committee to determine how they can demonstrate their competence to practice.

Physiotherapists who are intending to have a period of time where they will not be actively practising physiotherapy should consider what activities they should undertake that will assist them in retaining their competency and to ensure that their skills and knowledge remain current.

Have Your Contact Details Changed?

It is a requirement under Section 32 of the Physiotherapists Registration Act 2000 that the Board be notified of any changes to a physiotherapist's contact address within 14 days. Failure to notify the Board is an offence under the Act and may result in a fine of \$1,500. It may also result in the physiotherapist's name being removed from the register.

Physiotherapists should also be aware that the business address given to the Board is included in the Register of Physiotherapists, which is a public document. Where no business address is given, the mailing address will be used. Physiotherapists should ensure that an appropriate address is given to the Board as a mailing address.





Professional Boundaries and Sexual Misconduct: A Guide for Physiotherapists and the Public

The Board has developed a statement to provide guidance to physiotherapists and to inform the public of the expected standard of conduct in situations involving a potential breach of a professional boundary or actual sexual misconduct by a physiotherapist. A copy of this statement is attached to the circular.

Australian Standards for Physiotherapy

The Australian Physiotherapy Council has conducted a comprehensive review of the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy. The standards are intended to provide the profession with a benchmark for the knowledge, skills and attributes of a safe and effective entry level physiotherapist. The new standards are available from the APC website at www.physiocouncil.com.au

Board Privacy Policy

The Privacy Policy of the Board may be downloaded from the Board's website at www.physioboard.tas.gov.au

Release of Patient Information to other Health Care Providers

The Victorian Office of the Health Services Commissioner runs a particularly informative website (www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc) which may be useful to Tasmanian physiotherapists when establishing their practice's privacy policies. Guidelines to the Privacy Act can be obtained online at www.privacy.gov.au

National Registration Scheme

In July 2006, following the release of a Productivity Commission report on Australia's health workforce, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish by July 2008:

- A single national registration scheme for health professionals to facilitate workforce mobility, improve safety and quality, and reduce red tape; and
- A single national accreditation scheme for health education and training, to simplify and improve the consistency of current arrangements.

These schemes are to apply initially to nine health professions including physiotherapy. A COAG Task Force has been appointed to develop proposals for the two national schemes. Draft proposals have been released for consultation.

It is proposed that a single national registration body will be established to undertake registration and regulation of all health professions. This body will have offices in each state to provide local administration.

A national physiotherapists panel will provide advice to the national body on the registration of physiotherapists. It will develop standards and also handle less serious disciplinary matters pertaining to physiotherapists. It may have standing committees at a state level but this is not certain.

The chairs of each national professional panel will form a national health professional advisory panel which will advise the Board of the national registration body. Serious disciplinary matters will be handled by a separate State based body established to handle cases across all professions.

It is proposed that a single national health accreditation body will be established to set standards for accreditation and assess international graduates. This body will also have a Board, profession specific panels and an advisory committee made up of the chairs of the profession specific panels. This body will subcontract the existing Australian Physiotherapy Council to continue its role in this area for 3 years.

The Tasmanian Board is presently reviewing these proposals to ensure that Tasmanian consumers and Tasmanian physiotherapists will not be disadvantaged by the new arrangements.

Handling of Complaints

The Health Complaints Commissioner in his 2006 Annual Report has noted that many of the complaints received by his office arise because of poor complaints handling procedures by health providers, either as a result of a failure to provide a clear explanation of what has occurred or because of a failure to acknowledge patient concerns.

If a complaint is received by the Board, it is obliged to investigate the complaint. The Board is also required to advise the Health Complaints Commissioner of all complaints received. Similarly the Health Complaints Commissioner is required to consult the Board regarding any complaints about services provided by physiotherapists.

It is also a requirement of the Physiotherapists Registration Act that the Board must be notified of all claims for damages or other compensation for alleged negligence in your practice as a physiotherapist. Failure to notify the Board of such claims is punishable by a fine of up to \$1500.



Christmas/New Year Office Hours

The Board's office will close at 12 noon on Friday 22 December 2006 and re-open on Tuesday 2 January 2007.

The members and staff of the Board wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.