



## Media release

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### Annual Report reveals how the Chiropractic Board of Australia worked to protect the public in 2015/16

The Chiropractic Board of Australia intensified its focus on ensuring the public has access to safe and competent health services from registered chiropractors during 2015/16, according to information released today in the [2015/16 annual report](#) published by AHPRA.

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.

'Protecting the public is our number-one priority,' said Dr Wayne Minter AM, Chair of the Chiropractic Board of Australia. 'Many new initiatives were put into action this year to make sure chiropractors understand their obligations within the National Law. We particularly focused on ensuring every registered chiropractor understood their obligations around advertising and supporting public health.'

The Board published and implemented revised registration standards for professional indemnity insurance arrangements, recency of practice and continuing professional development, as well as developing protocols to analyse notifications data to assist the board in gaining a better understanding of the trends and risks in matters brought to the board's attention.

#### Highlights of the past year include:

- **More health practitioners overall:** There were almost 20,000 more registrants in 2015/16 across the 14 regulated professions than there were last year, totalling 657,621 health practitioners 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 over 98% of all registrants renewing online and on time, making it easier for health practitioners to renew their registration each year.
- **Increased registration for chiropractors:** As of 30 June 2016, there were 5,167 chiropractors registered across Australia, an increase of 3.38% from the previous year. The Board received 394 new applications for registration, an increase of 6.2%. Chiropractors make up 0.8% of all registered health practitioners across the National Scheme.
- **94.3% of chiropractors held general registration**, up 3.5% year on year; 5.7% held non-practising registration, a growth of 1% year on year.
- **Student registration for the chiropractic profession decreased:** The total number of registered chiropractic students was 1,240, a decrease of 34.5% year on year.
- **Growth in notifications across all professions:** There were 10,082 notifications received during the year, an increase of 19.7% nationally (representing 1.5% of the registration base). The top three notifier complaints related to clinical care (41.8%), medication issues (11.5%) and health impairment (10.7%). Just under half of all notifications were made by a patient, relative or member of the public. AHPRA closed 5,227 matters in the year.

- **Increase in new notifications about chiropractors:** In 2015/16 there were 146 notifications received nationally about chiropractors (including data from the Health Professional Councils Authority in NSW). Noting that there was a significant reduction in new notifications received in 2014/15, this represents an annual increase of 94.7%.
- **Chiropractors with notifications nearly twice the national average:** The national percentage of registered health practitioners with notifications about their conduct, health and /or performance across all professions received during 2015/16 was 1.5%. While still low, the percentage of registered chiropractors with notifications received in the past year was 2.8%.
- **Most advertising-related complaints about chiropractors:** 601 new complaints were received about possible statutory offences by chiropractors this year, constituting 44.6% of all statutory offence matters nationally. Of these, 96.5% related to advertising concerns, most of which were received from a small number of complainants.
- **Greater transparency:** A focus on improving transparency and accountability across all national health practitioner boards saw the introduction of quarterly performance reporting in April 2016. These reports are accessible [via the AHPRA website](#).
- **Practitioner survey created an opportunity for the Board to give chiropractors the tools they need:** The Board conducted a voluntary and anonymous email survey of chiropractors in 2015. The high response rate gave the Board a better understanding of chiropractors' knowledge of their obligations under the National Law so it could provide more regulatory guidance in areas such as professional development and advertising requirements.

Of these areas for improvement, Dr Minter said, 'Over the past year, we worked closely with AHPRA to develop and refine the processes for managing offences, particularly around advertising. While there was a marked rise in complaints about possible statutory offences by chiropractors, we continue to work with practitioners to ensure they understand what they can and can't say when advertising their practise.'

For more data and information relating to the Chiropractic 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 over 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, and that is 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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