



29 April 2020

Duncan Spender  
Chief Executive Officer  
Multicultural Council of Tasmania  
65 Hopkins Street  
MOONAH TAS 7009

Email: [ceo@mcot.org.au](mailto:ceo@mcot.org.au)

Dear Mr Spender

### Registration of overseas qualified health practitioners

Thank you again for raising this issue and for your concern for overseas qualified health practitioners. The following information is provided further to our discussion on 9 April 2020.

Your letter to Minister Hunt mentions the objective of the National Scheme of facilitating access to services. However, public protection is paramount in the administration of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, as the COAG Health Council has recently highlighted through a Policy Direction issued to the National Scheme in early 2020.

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, lists six objectives of the National Scheme including (a) to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered and (e) to facilitate the rigorous and responsive assessment of overseas qualified practitioners. The objective about facilitating access to health services needs to be considered in the context of all the objectives and the Policy Direction from Ministers.

While we appreciate that overseas qualified practitioners are keen to become registered, all health practitioners, regardless of background, need to meet the qualification and eligibility requirements set in the National Law and by National Boards to achieve the objectives of the National Scheme

The National Law sets out ways that practitioners can be qualified for registration. Overseas qualified practitioners typically have different pathways to registration, depending on their profession and the qualifications they hold.

Regulators in comparable health systems also set requirements that overseas qualified practitioners must meet to become registered in their jurisdiction.

The Medical Board of Australia (<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/International-Medical-Graduates.aspx>) and Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (<https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-and-Endorsement/International.aspx>) have published extensive information on the pathways to registration for overseas qualified practitioners.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
National Boards  
GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001 [Ahpra.gov.au](http://Ahpra.gov.au) 1300 419 495

Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

The COVID-19 pandemic is placing extra stress on Australia's health system and National Boards and Ahpra have committed to supporting governments in their responses, including through establishing a pandemic sub-register to significantly expand workforce capacity. However, it would be contrary to the objectives of the National Scheme and Ministerial Council directions to register practitioners who do not meet registration requirements.

I hope this information assists and please contact me on 6281 7969 if you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

**David Clements**  
State Manager Tasmania