

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COUNCIL (Aust & NZ) INC.
(OTC)**

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AUSTRALIA LIMITED
(OTAL)**

Joint Communiqué

**National Accreditation Functions under the
National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)**

The Occupational Therapy Council (Australia & NZ) Inc. (OTC) is making a submission to the Australian Health Ministers to be assigned the accreditation functions for the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia under Part 6 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act (National Law).

Representatives of OTC and Occupational Therapy Australia Limited (OTAL) met on 26 March 2011 in Melbourne to finalise arrangements between the two bodies for a model to be submitted to the Australian Health Ministers. The OTC and OTAL have negotiated an arrangement under a Memorandum of Understanding to provide the National Accreditation Functions under the auspices and on behalf of OTC. Essentially, the arrangement brings together the functions already conducted by OTC with the program accreditation function currently undertaken by OTAL.

The OTC currently assesses qualifications and skills of overseas trained occupational therapists and recommends recognition of accredited programs of study for registration purposes. The OTC has the charter, independence and capacity to undertake the full range of accreditation functions outlined by the National Law.

OTC comprises membership from the five State and Territory Occupational Therapy Registration Boards in Australia and New Zealand. The Board of Management comprises registered occupational therapists (nominated by the Registration Boards), nominees from the relevant professional associations (Occupational Therapy Australia Limited (OTAL) and New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists), nominees from the Australian and New Zealand Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ANZCOTE), and community representation.

The constitution and membership of the OTC is consistent with the 10 National Health Professional Accreditation Councils assigned accreditation functions for the 10 National Boards under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

The arrangement negotiated between OTC and OTAL establishes a model that draws on the strengths and experience of existing processes. The accreditation of programs by OTAL is recognised by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists as evidence that Australian training programs meet or exceed minimum international standards for occupational training. This facilitates international mobility and recognition of qualifications for Australian graduates. Continuing the established process with OTAL has an advantage of not creating a dual accreditation process.

OTAL and the Australian and New Zealand Occupational Therapy Registration Boards supports OTC in this submission. Both OTAL and OTC intend to work collaboratively in the future by ensuring that occupational therapists in Australia are safe and competent to practise thereby protecting the interests of the Australian consumers of occupational therapy services.

31 March 2011