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Communiqué on the meeting of 21 February 2011

Following the Occupational Therapy Council (Australia and New Zealand) – OTC meeting held on Monday 21 February 2011 the Board of Management has released the following information:

1. NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME (NRAS)

The OTC has representatives on a National Reference Group formed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to prepare for the incorporation of occupational therapists into the NRAS. Teleconferences have been held on 4 and 16 February 2011.

A website is now online for the health professions entering the NRAS in 2012 – <http://nras2012.ahpra.gov.au>.

Calls for the following submissions have been made:

- National Board appointments
- National Board size and composition
- Accreditation arrangements

National Board Size

The Council supported the default position of 9 Board members – 6 Practitioners and 3 Community Representatives.

2. ASSIGNMENT OF NATIONAL ACCREDITATION FUNCTIONS

The Council intends to make a submission to the AHPRA Project Team for the assignment of national accreditation functions to OTC on behalf of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia under Part 6 of the Health practitioner Regulation National Law Act.

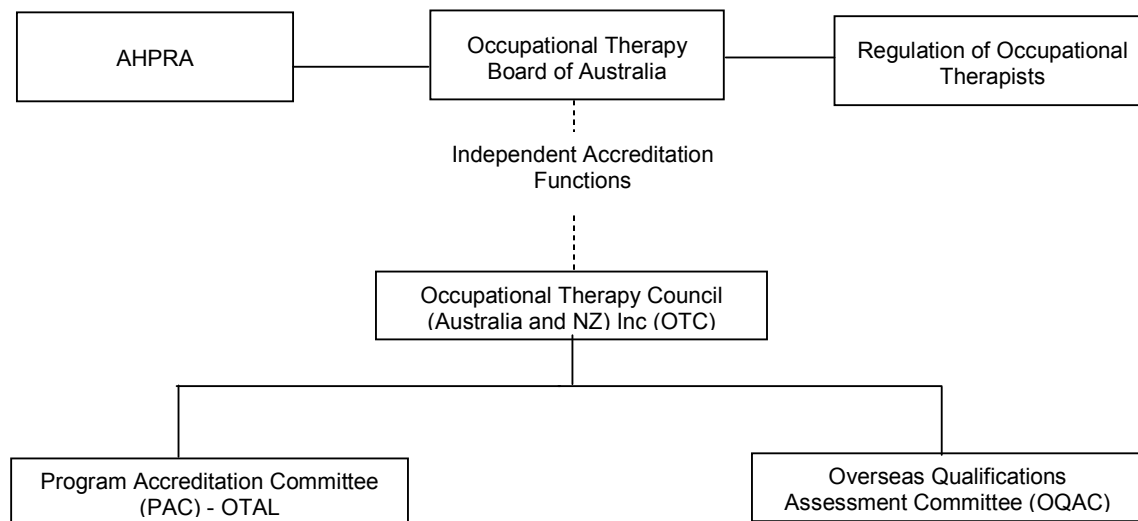
The OTC currently assesses qualifications and skills of overseas trained occupational therapists and recommends recognition of accredited programs of study for registration purposes. The OTC is putting in place arrangements to ensure it has the capacity to undertake the full range of accreditation functions outlined by the National Law:

- Developing accreditation standards for approval by a National Board
- Assessing programs of study, and the education providers that provide the programs of study, to determine whether the programs meet approved accreditation standards
- Assessing authorities in other countries to decide whether persons who complete the program of study conducted or accredited by the authorities have the skills and knowledge to practise the profession in Australia
- Overseeing the assessment of the skills and knowledge of overseas qualified health practitioners who are seeking registration in a health profession, and
- Making recommendations and giving advice to a National Board about the above matters

The OTC Executive Committee has met with senior AHPRA representatives in Melbourne to make them aware of OTC's intention to submit a proposal.

OTC is also seeking support for the submission from the Australian and New Zealand Registration Boards and Occupational therapy Australia Limited (OTAL).

The organisational structure of OTC under the NRAS would appear as follows:



A Memorandum of Agreement between OTC and OTAL has been drafted and is awaiting comment from OTAL.

3. REVIEW OF OVERSEAS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

OTC has successfully obtained a project grant from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in the sum of \$55,573.86 to undertake a review of its assessment processes for overseas trained occupational therapists for migration to Australia and readiness to practice.

Ms Skye McLennan has been appointed as the project officer and a Steering Committee has been formed to oversee the project.

A "What's New" article on the OTC website is seeking feedback on the process from previous applicants and supervisors.

An interim report is due by the end of March 2011 with a final report due by the end of May 2011.

4. ACCREDITATION OF COURSES IN AUSTRALIA

Following receipt of accreditation reports from OTAL the OTC agreed to recommend the following OT courses of study to the Australian and NZ Registration Boards for the purposes of registration –

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a) B App Sc (OT) (Pass and Hons) and M OT | - University of SA |
| b) B OT (Pass and Hons) | - University of Newcastle |
| c) B OT (Pass and Hons) | - James Cook University |

5. NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CONFERENCE

OTC in conjunction with the QLD Registration Board is looking at the possibility of scheduling a presentation on the NRAS at the National Conference to be held in the Gold Coast from 29 June to 1 July 2011.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next OTC face to face meeting and AGM will be held in Queensland on Saturday 24 September 2011.