

Health insights

National registration of paramedics

Paramedics are set to become the 15th registered health profession under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the 'National Scheme'), with the registration of paramedics on track for mid-2018.

A Bill to amend the Health Practitioner National Law (the 'National Law') is currently before the Queensland Parliament (the host jurisdiction for the purposes of the National Law) which, if passed, will see the establishment of the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the 'Board') and require those who use the title 'paramedic' to be registered. This will make paramedics subject to the same regulatory provisions that govern other health professions under the National Scheme in Australia, including medical practitioners, nurses and pharmacists.

Protection of the public is at the core of the National Scheme and will be the focus of the Board's functions together with maintaining the integrity of the profession. This will be achieved through registration processes, minimum qualifications and registration standards and powers to effectively deal with poor performing practitioners, those engaged in unprofessional behaviour or those with an impairment that impacts their ability to practice.

National registration will see minimum qualifications and other requirements (such as criminal history checks and continuing professional development) for registration put in place that will apply nationally. It will also prevent a person who is not qualified, registered or fit to practice from using the title 'paramedic' or holding themselves out to be a paramedic when they are not registered. The title of 'paramedic' will therefore now be protected and for the first time, defined nationally.

Under national registration, training programs will need to be accredited for registration purposes and only those with a qualification from an approved course of study will be eligible for registration. Grand-parenting arrangements will be in place for the first three years which, subject to approval by the Board, will facilitate the registration of those currently practising or studying. National registration will provide for better portability of qualifications, whether it be from State to State (and Territory) or from public to private sector and provide a regulatory framework within which both the public and private sectors can operate.

Finally, the national registration of paramedics will create powers to deal with paramedics who have an impairment that affects their ability to practice, are performing poorly or who engage in unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct. Powers include the power to impose conditions on a practitioner's registration, suspend a practitioner's registration or cancel a practitioner's registration and any such action will be noted on the register of practitioners.



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There will be much to digest over the coming months as the necessary legislative changes are made and the Board becomes operational. Those in the profession will need to familiarise themselves with various registration standards, codes of practice and guidelines on practice specific issues as well as their obligations and responsibilities under the National Law.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE MERIDIAN LAWYERS WEBSITE AS WE WILL PUBLISH FURTHER INFORMATION FOR PARAMEDICS ON THE REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE NATIONAL SCHEME IN THE COMING MONTHS.

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