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To all occupational therapists

Our profession has achieved one of the most significant milestones affecting the practice of occupational therapy in Australia.

On 27 August 2009, the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council announced that occupational therapy will be joining the Australian National Registration and Accreditation Scheme from 1 July 2012.

Occupational therapy is currently a partially regulated profession in Australia, being regulated in the jurisdictions of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Ministers had previously considered the inclusion of partially regulated professions against the criteria set out in the Intergovernmental Agreement governing the scheme, earlier this year. At that time they had agreed to the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, Chinese medicine practitioners and medical radiation practitioners from 1 July 2012. A decision was made not to include the profession of occupational therapy in the national scheme. After further considering the evidence against the criteria, Ministers have decided to include occupational therapists in the scheme from the same date.

The decision to include occupational therapy in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is real evidence that Australia's health planners and policy makers support the integral role of occupational therapists in delivering safe, quality health services, and acknowledges that these practitioners provide a front line service as key members of the multidisciplinary team.

This is a superb outcome for the profession - probably one of the most significant achievements in the history of our profession in Australia (if not the most significant), and of course, wonderful news.

As Chair of the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Australia and New Zealand) and Chair of the Queensland Board, I would like to express sincere appreciation to all those who have worked over the years, and more recently, to achieve this ultimate goal.

I also extend to all occupational therapists my congratulations on this exciting achievement and look forward to the continuing growth, success and professional collaboration of occupational therapy across Australia.

Regards

Jim Carmichael
Chairperson
28 August 2009