

PHYSIOTHERAPY BOARD OF NEW ZEALAND SUBMISSION

Review of the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTMRA)

The Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand is the statutory regulatory authority for physiotherapy authorised under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Physiotherapy Board welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the review of TTMRA. In making this submission the Board is responding solely to Section 5: Occupations of the Productivity Commission Issues Paper.

The Board believes that in general terms TTMRA is achieving its purpose. However jurisdiction shopping and hopping is a concern for the Physiotherapy Board.

The accompanying Table 1 details the number of New Zealand registered physiotherapists applying for registration in Australia under TTMRA in the current year who first gained registration as a physiotherapist in New Zealand during the period 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008 (as evidenced requests received under TTMRA as at 30 June 2008 from Australian registration boards and subsequently responded to by this Board furnishing information on individual New Zealand registrants). Table 2 details the total number of responses provided under TTMRA by this Board since 2005.

An increasing number of overseas educated practitioners apply for registration in New Zealand under local legislation the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA) with no intention to work here. Registration in New Zealand is then used as entry in to Australia utilising TTMRA (thus circumventing the perceived costly, lengthy and laborious Australian examination route to registration). The Board is aware that several overseas organisations, including Australian based recruitment agents and employers, actively promote this back door route into Australia.

While the Physiotherapy Board aims to process overseas applications under HPCAA on a cost recovery basis these shop and hop applications do impact on Board resources during processing. Staff time could be more productively used processing applications of those applicants who genuinely intend residing in New Zealand and actively contributing to the provision of physiotherapy services to the public of New Zealand.

The Board believes that the inclusion of residency requirements on the granting of registration in the home jurisdiction would markedly reduce the incidence of jurisdiction shopping and hopping.

Table 1

New Zealand registered physiotherapists applying for registration in Australia under TTMRA in the current year who first gained registration as a physiotherapist in New Zealand during the period 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008

<i>Year first registered in New Zealand</i>	<i>New Zealand qualified</i>	<i>Overseas qualified</i>	<i>Total</i>
1 Jan-30 Jun 2008	6	15	21
1 Jan-31 Dec 2007	10	8	18

A total of 84 requests were received under TTMRA between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2008 from Australian registration boards and subsequently responded to by this Board furnishing information on individual New Zealand registrants.

39 (46%) of responses provided are for individuals who first gained registration as a physiotherapist in New Zealand during the period 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008; the majority of these physiotherapists are overseas qualified.

Table 2

Total number of responses provided under TTMRA since 2005

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>
2008 (year to 30 June)	84
2007	132
2006	112
2005	129