



What is the APC?

In light of the recently announced changes towards national registration and accreditation, it is timely to look back over the history that has led to the establishment of the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC). Pharmacy authorities were established in all Australian colonies by 1880. They first met as a group at the Inter-Colonial Pharmacy Conference in Melbourne in 1885. For the next century, the pharmacy authorities met regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern, and occasionally to take concerted action. While one of the state registrars provided a secretariat for the conferences, there was no formal structure to enable follow-up action between these meetings.

At the Conference of Boards held in 1990, Mr Lester Hosto, then Vice-President of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (USA) attended. He outlined how that association operated and suggested that a formally constituted association of Australian authorities could have many benefits. Hosto's challenge was a catalyst and, at the next meeting of the Conference of Boards, it was decided to create a formally incorporated body, the members of which were the pharmacy registering authorities in each Australian state and territory. The Association of Pharmacy Registering Authorities (APRA) was born.

There have been many changes since the forming of APRA. APRA became the Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities (COPRA) on 24 June 2002 and, for the first time, employed secretariat staff on a part-time basis. COPRA then merged with the (then) Australian Pharmacy Examining Council on 1 December 2006, adding the roles of assessment of non-Australian pharmacy graduates and pre-registration examinations to its former role of accrediting schools of pharmacy and being the collective voice of the registering authorities. COPRA changed its name to the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) in June 2007.

The Council of Australian Governments signed an intergovernmental agreement in March 2008 making national registration and accreditation a reality from 1 July 2010. The APC is looking forward to a new and exciting era of nationally consistent regulation and registration that will build on the strong foundation of national consistency in policies, processes and approaches to pharmacy practice and accreditation that the Council has already achieved.

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