

AMT Media Release

August 3, 2017

AMT introduces police history check requirement for massage therapists

A national professional association representing qualified Massage Therapists has introduced mandatory police history checks for its 3,240 practitioner and student members. The Association of Massage Therapists (AMT) has instituted the checking requirement as part of its broader investment in public safety.

Under the scheme, new applicants for membership to AMT will be required to provide a police history check. Current members will also be required to provide a new check every three years.

AMT Chairperson, Michelle McKerron, says that the new police check requirement underscores AMT's commitment to the highest possible preventive measures to protect the public from inappropriate conduct.

"AMT has led some exciting public safety initiatives over the past five years, including the release of a comprehensive Massage Therapy Code of Practice in 2013. We recognise how important it is for people to feel safe when they access treatment from a massage therapist. I am incredibly proud to be involved with AMT's new police check requirement, which I believe will enhance public confidence in the services provided by AMT members," Ms McKerron said.

AMT's police check scheme will bring AMT members in line with regulatory requirements for registered health practitioners such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and optometrists.

"AMT has annually audited the mandatory continuing professional development of members since 1994 as part of a wider program of quality assurance. We also monitor the currency of members' insurance and senior first aid. Requiring a police check every three years effectively means that AMT is now doing more to monitor our members than the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency does in respect of registered health practitioners," Ms McKerron said. "This is a highly cost-effective and accessible way for AMT members to scrutinise themselves to an independent, third party regulatory body."

AMT has adopted the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency criminal history standard to determine the relevance of offences in terms of fitness to practice as a massage therapist.

The police history check requirement is being rolled out over two phases. From 1st August 2017, all new applicants to the Association will be required to provide a national police history check. Current AMT members will be required to comply by 1st July 2018, with a three-year cycle of renewal from the date of issue of the check.

AMT members have responded positively to the initiative, seeing it as a validation of their status as responsible and accountable health care professionals. Neutral Bay massage therapist, Sharon Livingstone, switched to AMT from another association in 2016.

"I joined AMT because I wanted to be with an organisation leading the industry in information dissemination, protecting members and engaging with the public. The introduction of a National Police Check adds another layer to this. It shows the community and our clients that AMT members are committed to providing safe treatment to their clients, and that medical practitioners can refer patients with confidence."

Media enquiries:
Rebecca Barnett 0414 732 873

