

# educator news august 2015

## **Training package endorsement**

Obviously, the biggest development since the last edition of Educator News was the endorsement of the new training package qualifications on 27 July by the Australian Industry Skills Committee.

The new units of competence are now available for download from:

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/HLT07>

## **Position statements**

### **Industry Regulation:**

Over the past three months, AMT has released a series of Position Statements on key issues impacting the practice of massage therapy.

The AMT Position Statement on Regulation of the Massage Therapy Industry is based on the premise that the current self-regulatory mechanisms in place within the sector need to be substantially strengthened in the interests of public health and safety. Further, AMT believes that the proposed National Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Practitioners, recently endorsed by the Health Ministers, does not provide adequate protections against rogue and unqualified practitioners.

A recent high-profile case in NSW, involving a massage therapist convicted of multiple counts of sexual assault, underscores the need for more stringent regulatory provisions. The reported incidents occurred within the context of the operation of the NSW Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Practitioners, which has been in force since August 2008. The NSW Code, which forms the basis of the proposed National Code, is basically a form of negative licensing. Negative licensing is a statutory scheme that allows a practitioner to practise an occupation unless they have breached the statutory requirements. The problem with this system is that there are no barriers to entry for practitioners and it is effectively only triggered by a complaint from a member of the public after an issue has occurred. For this reason, negative licensing has been likened to parking an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff.

You can access the full AMT's full regulatory Position Statement here:

<http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/position-statements/AMT-Position-Statement-Regulation.pdf>

### **Fertility Massage:**

In early June, AMT became aware that a series of Fertility Massage workshops were being offered on the east coast of Australia. We immediately released a Position Statement that clearly stated that AMT does not recognise or endorse fertility massage as part of the scope of practice of massage therapy.

We have serious misgivings about the training that was on offer and the associated claims, especially given that there is a lack of robust underpinning evidence for the effectiveness of the treatment.



## educator news

You can access AMT's full Position Statement here:

<http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/position-statements/AMT-Position-Statement-Fertility-Massage.pdf>

### **Orphanage volunteering:**

More recently, AMT was concerned by the marketing activities of a U.S. based company called Buds to Blossoms. The company has been aggressively targeting massage therapists in Australia in an attempt to recruit volunteers to its AIDS orphans project in Vietnam. AMT is deeply concerned about the activities of this company as well as the broader practise of orphanage volunteering.

While AMT recognises and acknowledges that sometimes institutions are the only choice for vulnerable children, we do not support, endorse or promote orphanage tourism. AMT's position on this is consistent with major international child welfare agencies, charities and advocacy groups. We urge you to take a moment to read AMT's position on orphanage volunteering so you get a full picture of why AMT does not support it:

<http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/position-statements/AMT-Position-Statement-Orphanage-Volunteering.pdf>

The AMT Board has also formally endorsed the official position statement of the International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) on orphanage volunteering. Both the AMT and IAIM statements were widely circulated within the massage therapy community in Australia in late July.

### **Working with children:**

Massage therapists are not currently captured by Child Protection legislation in most Australian states. The notable exceptions are Queensland and South Australia. In Queensland, massage therapists who work with minors are required to apply for a "Working with children check", known as a Blue Card. In South Australia, massage therapists are required to lodge a statement outlining their child safe environment policies and procedures with the Department for Families and Communities. This compliance statement sets out the minimum requirements a business must meet to demonstrate that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to establish and maintain a child safe environment.

In NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, working with children check procedures only apply to massage therapists who work in child-related contexts such as pre-schools, day care centres and schools.

Massage therapists in the ACT and Tasmania are not currently captured by Working with Vulnerable People legislation.

In a recent position statement, AMT articulated its concerns around the lack of a coherent national framework for child protection in connection with the practice of massage therapy in Australia. You can read the full position statement here:

<http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/position-statements/AMT-Position-Statement-Working-with-Children.pdf>