Joint Position Statement

MRI examinations must be performed by Ahpra registered Medical Radiation Practitioners

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a uniquely complex and inherently a high-risk modality, where significant potential exists for serious harm to patients, staff, and members of the public if safety protocols are not rigorously upheld. The safe operation of MRI scanners requires Ahpra-registered Medical Radiation Practitioners (MRPs) who possess advanced technical expertise, strong clinical judgement, and rigorous MRI-specific safety training and awareness.

Recent events have identified that some medical imaging providers in Australia have engaged personnel who are ***not Ahpra-registered Medical Radiation Practitioners*** *to perform clinical MRI examinations. This practice presents an unacceptable risk and undermines the safety standards expected within the Australian healthcare system.*

To maintain public trust and ensure safe, high-quality imaging services, our joint recommendation is that all MRI examinations conducted in Australian healthcare settings must be performed by Ahpra-registered Medical Radiation Practitioners who are subject to regulatory oversight in line with national professional standards.

This recommendation supports safe and accountable practice and aligns with the focus on public safety that is a stated priority of all National Boards regulated by Ahpra and categorically reflects the RANZCR standards.

Introduction

This position statement affirms that Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) examinations in Australian healthcare settings must be undertaken exclusively by medical radiation practitioners registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra).

This requirement supports safe, ethical, and accountable practice, aligns with the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (MRPBA) *Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice 2nd Edition 2020*, and operates within robust clinical governance frameworks as outlined in the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) Standards of Practice for Clinical Radiology (RANZCR, 2020) and the RANZCR MRI Safety Guidelines (RANZCR, 2021).

Background

MRI is a uniquely complex and high-risk imaging modality with inherent potential for injury to patients, the general public and staff. Safe operation requires personnel with advanced technical expertise, clinical judgment and rigorous safety training and awareness.

To practice in Australia, Medical Radiation Practitioner's (MRPs) must be registered with Ahpra and hold a Bachelor's or master's qualification in medical radiation practice. They are also required to meet the Professional Capabilities as outlined by the MRPBA (MRPBA, 2025) as part of the national registration requirements established by Ahpra in 2012. This ensures that MRPs are suitably trained and qualified to perform a variety of imaging and guiding therapeutic procedures safely (including MRI examinations), in alignment with Ahpra's priority for all health professions, and the wider expectations of the community. See appendix 2 for comparable international education and training. Reporting of MRI incidents in Australia are to the Therapeutic Good Administration (TGA).

Deaths have, however, occurred as a result of poor safety practices in MRI environments as recently as July 2025 in other developed countries such as the USA (Dervisevic, 2025) where medical imaging education and registration requirements are less rigorous than those mandated for MRP's in Australia.

Practitioners who have MRI as part of their Scope of Practice, must demonstrate key capabilities and enabling components which encompass the knowledge, skills and attributes needed by all MRPs. (MRPBA, 2025, Appendix 1).

MRPs involved in hybrid imaging techniques, such as MRI-PET and MR-Linac treatments, must also undergo specialised training to ensure the safe and effective use and operation of these advanced technologies in the delivery of care.

In recent months, concerns have emerged regarding MRI clinical examinations being performed on patients by personnel who are **not** qualified Medical Radiation Practitioners eligible for registration with Ahpra, a practice which may introduce significant and unacceptable risk to patients, staff and to the general public. This development is at odds with Ahpra's National Scheme Strategy 2020-25 with its stated vision being "Our communities have trust and confidence in regulated health practitioners' and its stated purpose being 'Safe and professional health practitioners for Australia' (Ahpra Website, 2025).

The Position

This joint statement by our two professional bodies affirms our position that, in order to uphold public expectations of safe practice, and to ensure safety of patients and our community, MRI clinical examinations in Australian healthcare settings must only be performed by MRPs registered with Ahpra, and thus subject to regulatory oversight.

MRPs performing MRI must be actively involved in all aspects of the MRI clinical examination process, including patient safety screening, preparation, positioning, image acquisition and data management.

This position supports safe and accountable practice and aligns with the focus on public safety that is a priority not only of the MRPBA, but of all National Boards regulated by Ahpra (Regulating Australia's medical radiation practitioners, 2025). This position also categorically reflects the RANZCR standards (RANZCR, 2020, 2021).

MRI clinical examinations require a high level of clinical expertise, safety vigilance, and professional accountability. Ensuring that only registered MRPs perform these procedures protects patients, strengthens regulatory compliance, and reinforces the integrity of medical radiation practice.

Additional supporting information can be found in Appendix 1 and a comparison of current international MR Education and Training can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendation

Our joint recommendation is a mandate that all MRI clinical examinations in Australian healthcare settings be performed by Ahpra-registered Medical Radiation Practitioners in accordance with existing national standards.

This recommendation serves to protect patients and staff, strengthen regulatory compliance, and reinforce the integrity and safety of medical imaging and Medical Radiation Practice.

We call on all relevant bodies to endorse and implement this position in alignment with the MRPBA Professional Capabilities and RANZCR standards**.**

References

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APPENDIX ONE: Support information for appropriately trained MRI Radiographers

Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Radiology (RANZCR)

Both the RANZCR Standards of Practice (2025) and the RANZCR MRI Safety Guidelines (2022) explicitly endorse a workforce model in which appropriately trained, Ahpra-registered radiographers are responsible for the safe and effective operation of MRI scanners.

RANZCR Standards of Practice

Standard 1 – Governance and Safe Practice

- Standard 1 requires providers to implement and maintain a robust governance framework that ensures safe, high-quality radiology services across all facilities.
- Standard 1.2 further specifies that the physical infrastructure must be designed, maintained, and managed to support the safe and effective delivery of imaging services, including MRI.

Standard 4 – Workforce

- Standard 4 states that ***all staff must be appropriately qualified, registered, and credentialed*** for the duties they perform.
- It emphasises that safe, high-quality imaging depends on a competent, well-supported workforce working within a structured safety framework.
- This includes maintaining relevant credentials, adhering to defined scopes of practice, and engaging in ongoing training and continuing professional development (CPD).

Together, these standards establish clear expectations that MRI can only be performed by personnel with the appropriate professional registration, competency, and credentialing—which, in the Australian context, applies specifically to Ahpra-registered Medical Radiation Practitioners, including radiographers.

RANZCR MRI Safety Guidelines

RANZCR's MRI Safety Guidelines outline a detailed safety framework for MRI clinical practice and research. Key components include:

- Defined safety responsibilities
- Strict competency requirements, ensuring anyone working in MRI Zones III and IV has appropriate MRI-specific education, including physics, implants, hazards, emergency procedures, and patient monitoring.
- Operational requirements, including staff training, incident management, equipment safety, zone control, and annual safety refreshers.
- A focus on risk minimisation, ensuring MRI is performed safely and consistently to protect patients, staff, and the public from preventable harm.

The guidelines specifically identify radiographers, nuclear medicine technologists, and radiation therapists as MRI practitioners—explicitly recognising them as the workforce responsible for safe MRI operation, provided they are correctly trained and credentialed.

Professional Registration and Competence

Both RANZCR documents reinforce that MRI practitioners must:

- Hold Ahpra registration under the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (MRPBA)
- Maintain continuing professional development (CPD)
- Demonstrate ongoing MRI-specific competence through training, credentialing, and performance review

This requirement ensures that MRI is performed by regulated professionals who are accountable to national standards, statutory registration, and professional codes of conduct.

Together, RANZCR's standards provide strong, explicit professional endorsement for MRI-trained radiographers as the safe and appropriate operators of MRI services in Australia and New Zealand.

Medical Radiations Professions Board of Australia (MPRBA)

In addition, the MRPBA Professional Capabilities (2025) define the national framework for safe and competent practice across six domains of practice:

- **Domain 1** – The Medical Radiation Practitioner: MRI demands advanced imaging skills, anatomical expertise, and clinical reasoning — all core competencies of registered radiographers.
- **Domain 2 –** Professional & Ethical Practitioner: Registered radiographers are legally accountable and bound by professional codes of conduct.
- **Domain 3 –** Communicator & Collaborator: MRI safety depends on precise communication both written and verbal, particularly during implant screening and contraindication checks.
- **Domain 4 –** Lifelong Learner: Radiographers maintain current knowledge of MRI protocols, safety standards, and emerging technologies.
- **Domain 5 –** Safety, Quality & Risk Management Practitioner: MRI environments present unique risks — including projectile hazards, thermal injuries, and quench emergencies — requiring formal training and adherence to work health and safety protocols (RANZCR Standards 5 & 6).
- **Domain 6** – Leader and Stewardship: MRI practice requires sound professional judgement to be exercised, along with ethical integrity, compassion in clinical decision-making and communication, particularly during challenging conversations. This also includes the ability to proactively identify, respectfully challenge and address risks, errors, or instances of low-value care, while fostering transparent dialogue within multiprofessional teams (Page 2, MRPBA, 2025).

APPENDIX TWO: Comparative International Education and Training

United Kingdom:
To practice MRI in the UK, a radiographer must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and have completed formal training and gained practical experience in MRI through in-house training or a specialist programme, often as part of a master's degree or postgraduate diploma. This qualification is not always mandatory for all roles (SoR, 2020).

Canada:
To practice MRI in Canada requires completion of a diagnostic radiography program or a specialised magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) graduate certificate, followed by 1-year clinical placement & certification through the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) and/or a provincial regulatory body, depending on the province of practice. Specific licensure or membership requirements of the provincial regulatory body or association must be met for the province where employment is sought (CAMRT, 2025).

New Zealand:
To train and then be registered with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board (MRTB) as an MRI radiographer in New Zealand, involves completion of an undergraduate radiography degree followed by postgraduate-level MRI-specific education, such as a Graduate Certificate in Magnetic Resonance Imaging. New Zealand mandates a separate scope of practice for MRI, requiring specialised postgraduate education and registration as an MRI technologist (NZMRTB, 2025).