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Sent: Monday, 23 August 2010 5:00 PM
To: NationalBoards
Subject: Consultation Paper Comments - Testing

Dear Chair

Re: Consultation Paper - Psychological Testing.

Many thanks for addressing the issue of protection of the public with such a well constructed and comprehensive discussion paper.

I strongly urge the Board to pursue the option of legislating to restrict the use of certain psychological tests to registered practitioners only. Whilst this may create some restrictions with respect to availability of services, my experience, and those of my colleagues, is invariably one in which the mantra, "more harm than good" can be applied.

The complexity of certain cases with respect to their testing outcomes and interpretation of their test results still serves to baffle many highly experienced practitioners. Extremely high levels of skill and knowledge are required to effectively integrate test material, interview material, and case history material together with knowledge of psychopathology, neuropathology and principles of measurement. I would consider that as a minimum, testers require a known set of competencies, continual professional development in the specific field and a code of conduct that must be adhered to and which can be regulated. Such requirements can only be achieved within the context of professional registration.

There is no doubt in my mind that incompetence in psychological testing has the potential to cause significant harm, and that insufficient training and regulation has the potential to create incompetence. My experience has included testing for cognitive competency and undertaking Guardianship Board applications. The results of such testing can be used in legal determinations about an individual's right to drive, to care for self, to continue in employment, to make decisions about living arrangements, or to manage their finances. Not only is there risk involved with inappropriately trained personnel administering and reporting upon tests, but often the validity of the test itself is reduced once an individual has had exposure to the test material. There is a great need to restrict the flow of psychological tests within the community.

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment upon the PBA's Consultation Paper.

Yours sincerely
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