

**From:** Alison Fonseca [<mailto:alisonf@counsellingcanhelp.com.au>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 December 2010 2:25 PM

**To:** NationalBoards

**Subject:** submission regarding draft Guidelines for Practice Endorsement - Clinical Psychology

Dear Sir

I write to request the PBA widen the eligibility criteria outlined in the Guidelines for Practice Endorsement – **Clinical Psychologist**. I believe I meet all the competency criteria as defined in the draft guidelines, however the APS 'Medicare' team assessed I did not meet these standards and recommended I undertake further study.

I have been in clinical private practice for over 10 years, with a caseload that includes seriously mental ill individuals. I treat people with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, treatment resistant depression, anorexia nervosa, pervasive developmental disorders, post traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse, to name some of the presenting issues. I have an extensive background in professional practice as a psychologist, dealing with the courts, primary health services and across three levels of government. In 2009 I trained social services staff in Singapore who work with traumatised children. As a practitioner in regional Victoria I am regarded as a specialist in perinatal mental health (I have presented at conference level), however I also receive referrals from adult community mental health services and GPs.

My continuing professional development has always included training with an assessment and diagnostic focus as well as training related to the provision of counselling. I am a member of the Australian College of Psychologists in Clinical Private Practice and have been a member of this Victorian organisation for over 5 years.

*I believe colleges representing the interests of psychologists in clinical private practice have been inadequately consulted by both the PBA and the commonwealth government, in matters relating to regulation, specialisation and remuneration.*

I am very concerned that many experienced, competent professional psychologists who have been in private practice for years, providing clinical, evidence based treatment for individuals unable to be supported by the public mental health system, have been overlooked by the PBA, which appears to have accepted a definition of 'clinical psychologist' from one stakeholder only. This is poor process.

Please can we have some common sense in the equation? If a psychologist has been able to maintain a successful private practice for over five years with a client referral base from primary mental/health services, has been actively researching and presenting their work to peers, has had training in assessment and diagnosis, writes detailed reports for state and commonwealth departments, gives evidence in court, provides training to colleagues/consumers and has no complaints or claims made against them, surely this is testimony to their competencies in the practice of clinical psychology?

Finally, I note the online register on the PBA site does not list me as having an endorsement, however I am in receipt of information from the PBA that I am endorsed as a counselling psychologist due to membership of the APS College of Counselling Psychologists. I would appreciate you amending your records accordingly. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

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