



Communiqué

3 August 2012

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). This communiqué highlights key issues from the 32nd meeting of the Board on 3 August 2012. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Psychology Board of Australia members from 30 August 2012

Australia's state and territory health ministers recently announced changes to the membership of the 10 National Boards originally appointed in 2009. On 31 August 2009, Ministers announced the appointment of 108 members to National Boards for three-year terms.

The following people were appointed or reappointed to the Psychology Board of Australia for the next three years:

Professor Brin Grenyer	Reappointed as Chair and a practitioner member from New South Wales
Professor Gina Geffen	Reappointed as a practitioner member from Queensland
Professor Alfred Allan	Reappointed as a practitioner member from Western Australia
Professor Trang Thomas	Appointed as a practitioner member from Victoria
Mr Radomir (Radek) Stratil	Reappointed as a practitioner member from South Australia
Mr Geoffrey Gallas	Reappointed as a practitioner member from the Australian Capital Territory
Mrs Kathryn Crawley	Appointed as a practitioner member from the Northern Territory
Ms Ann Stark	Reappointed as a practitioner member from Tasmania
Ms Fiona McLeod	Reappointed as a community member
Mr Christopher O'Brien	Reappointed as a community member
Ms Joanne Muller	Appointed as a community member
Ms Mary Brennan	Appointed as a community member

It is important to acknowledge and warmly thank the outgoing Board members for their leadership and significant contributions over the past three years. The implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme has been a huge task, and Board members have worked tirelessly to transition to the new scheme.

It is also important to welcome the new Board appointees, as the Psychology Board of Australia embarks on the next chapter of consolidating and progressing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) communiqué is published on the AHPRA website, www.ahpra.gov.au, under *Legislation & Publications*.

National Boards consult on international criminal history checks

All of the 14 National Boards, including the Psychology Board of Australia, are currently consulting on options for refining international criminal history checks used to assess applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

Under the National Scheme, National Boards set registration standards that every registered practitioner must meet. One of these standards relates to criminal history. The National Boards are working with AHPRA to refine the requirements for criminal history checks from jurisdictions outside Australia.

The current approach involves checking Australian criminal history through CrimTrac and requiring applicants to sign a declaration disclosing any criminal history outside Australia. When a criminal history is disclosed, further investigations are made and the criminal history is assessed according to the relevant Board's *Criminal History Registration Standard*.

The National Boards must decide whether this is adequate or if they should increase the scrutiny of applicants' international criminal history. In effect, the Boards must balance their responsibility under the National Law to protect the public, with the need to ensure there is no unnecessary red tape in assessing and managing applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

The National Boards are open to feedback and seeking input on this complex issue. The details of the options under consideration as well as background information in relation to international criminal history checks are published in the consultation paper at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/News/Current-Consultations.aspx.

Please provide feedback by email to criminalhistoryconsult@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on 17 August 2012.

Psychology Board of Australia website

The Board continues to publish important information on its website. Psychologists are encouraged to access the website regularly to keep up to date with guidelines, policies, frequently asked questions (FAQs), fact sheets and registration standards at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

Psychologists are encouraged to review the following changes which will be on the website shortly:

- *New Fact Sheet on Supervisor Training* – this fact sheet explains the Board's transition arrangements for Supervisors
- *Updated Fact Sheet for Supervisors* - this fact sheet has been updated to include the Board's new transition provisions for supervisors

Review of registration standards, guidelines and codes

One of the Board's functions under the National Law is to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the psychology profession. The Board must consult widely about any standards, codes or guidelines that it develops.

Registration standards are developed by the Board and must be approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC). Registration standards are due for review at least every three years. The following registration standards, that are common across all the health professions, will be up for review in 2013:

- Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard
- Criminal History Registration Standard
- English Language Skills Registration Standard
- Professional Indemnity Insurance Arrangements Registration Standard
- Recency of Practice Registration Standard

The registration standard specific to the psychology profession that is up for review in 2013 is:

- General Registration Standard

The Board has recently reviewed the Provisional Registration Standard (in 2012) and the Area of Practice Endorsements Registration Standard was updated in 2011.

The Board is also due to review the following:

- Guidelines for mandatory notifications
- Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services
- Guidelines on CPD
- Guidelines on the 4+2 internship program for provisional psychologists and supervisors

Over the next few months, all National Boards will be starting a process to review their registration standards and the codes and guidelines that are due for review. The reviews will draw on the best available evidence and address issues that have been identified with the registration standards and the codes and guidelines in the first three years after implementation. A plan is being developed to try and minimise the impact on stakeholders of multiple consultation processes, particularly for stakeholders common across professions.

Accreditation matters

Under section 49 of the National Law, the National Board requires accreditation reports from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) before it can approve the accredited programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration.

The list of Board-approved courses is published on the Board's website.

Newsletter

The Psychology Board of Australia's Newsletters, *Connections*, have been published on the Board's website since December 2010. During 2011, the newsletter was circulated as an e-newsletter to all registrants for whom the Board had email addresses in addition to being published on the website.

Issue five of *Connections* is currently under development and will be circulated to all registrants for whom the Board has email addresses shortly. The Board will also publish the newsletter on its website.

The Board encourages all registrants to read this newsletter, and familiarise themselves with the work of the Board.

Stakeholder meetings

Members of the National Board continue to be very active in meeting with local registrants and stakeholders and presenting at public meetings and universities.

The Board and representatives of the Board have recently had ongoing conversations with various universities and students, health and education departments, and at psychology professional society meetings.

30th International Congress of Psychology

The Board delayed its July 2012 meeting in order to present a symposium on regulation and licensure at the 30th International Congress of Psychology in Cape Town, South Africa. Issues discussed included:

- Transition to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme
- The importance of title protection under the National Law, including title protection for nine recognised areas of practice endorsement
- The development of unified education standards for psychology, with an integrated accreditation scheme across all higher education training providers
- The development of registration standards outlining mandatory professional indemnity insurance requirements, mandatory continuing professional development, and obligations to report malpractice, as well as criminal history checks, requirements for English language competency, and advertising and ethics standards
- The opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration with 13 other health professions being regulated within the same single National Scheme, and

- The challenges of matching national with international psychology standards to promote mobility.

In addition, the Board participated in a number of other international symposia and panel discussions on the development of international standards for competence as a psychologist, and was also involved in a range of other professional meetings with psychology regulators from across the globe.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
10 August 2012