



THIRD MEETING OF THE PSYCHOLOGY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA 20 NOVEMBER 2009

The third meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia was held on 20 November 2009 in Melbourne. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

The Board noted progress with implementation of the new national scheme. With respect to the legislative program the Board is pleased that:

- the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* ('Bill B') has been passed without amendment by the Queensland Parliament and is due to commence on 1 July 2010 (this also covers adoption of the national law for Queensland)
- in NSW the national law has passed both houses of Parliament without amendment, and
- in Victoria the national law has passed the lower house of Parliament and is due to be debated in the upper house shortly.

As in previous meetings, in its third meeting the Board focussed on the matters it had to resolve to enable the scheme to commence on 1 July 2010. The Board gave further consideration to matters of budget in order that the Board's first Health Profession Agreement can be prepared. The Board approved a budget for 2009-10 so that the Agency can commence employing staff and leasing premises for the new State and Territory and national offices. The Board noted that recruitment to senior positions in the national Agency is progressing and remains on track.

The Board also considered its budget for 2010-11 and will give further consideration to this at future meetings, following the outcome of the registration migration process that will confirm final registrant numbers, and due diligence processes that will confirm reserves that will be transferred from existing State and Territory boards.

The Board discussed progress with the consultation on the Board's proposals for registration standards and other matters that were posted on the Agency's website (www.ahpra.gov.au) on 27 October 2009. The Board also considered the consultation papers from all other boards. The Board noted trends in responses to the paper received so far and the response received from the Governance Committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.

The Board discussed feedback from the national psychology forum held on 18 November in Melbourne on the Board's consultation paper. The Board noted the forum was well attended, and appreciated the opportunity to hear the views of stakeholders on the Board's draft standards and proposals.

The consultation closes on 24 November 2009, and the Board encourages all interested parties to make their submissions so that the Board can consider the broadest possible range of views. At its December meeting, the Board will consider revised draft registration standards, and complete this work in order to submit the registration standards to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval.

The Board acknowledges the tight timetable for completion of this work. The timetable is necessary so that all registrants can have advice ahead of commencement day on 1 July 2010 of the new registration standards and requirements.

The Board considered the existing internship arrangements that State and Territory boards have in place, and the need for those currently undertaking internships to have certainty as to their status following transition to the national scheme. The Board agreed in principle that the current arrangements approved by State and Territory boards for those currently undertaking internship or supervised practice programs should be honoured by the Board, that is, existing interns who complete their internships within the timeframe specified by the relevant State or Territory board will be accepted by the Board as qualified for general registration under the National Law.

The Board discussed a draft code of conduct for the profession, and considered a range of issues concerning its content and whether such a code might be developed to apply commonly to a number of regulated health professions. The Board agreed to consider this again at its February meeting, with a view to releasing a draft code for public consultation.

The Board gave consideration to what other codes and guidelines might be needed for the profession on commencement of the national scheme. The Board agreed to work with other boards on the development of guidelines covering mandatory reporting obligations under the National Law, and advertising of practitioner services. The Board expects to give consideration to drafts of these guidelines at its December meeting, and to release draft codes and guidelines for public consultation on 5 March 2010.

The Board discussed progress with research into the risks associated with the use of psychometric tests by those without psychology qualifications. The Board agreed to proceed with the preparation of a consultation paper, and invite submissions, in order to better quantify the level of harm or potential harm associated with the unregulated use of psychometric tests, and assess whether there is a need for further legislation to restrict who may carry out psychometric testing.

The Board considered progress with the establishment of the Registration and Notification Management Information System, to support the Board's functions, as well as progress with the electronic document and management system, finance, human resources, electronic mail and Microsoft Office, and the web based online services.

The Board considered a number of other administrative and financial matters, including possible fees for those who undertake work as members of committees or panels of the Board.

The Board welcomes the opportunity presented by the hosting in Sydney of the 4th International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing of Psychologists (www.hprb.org/psych_congress), to engage with other regulators and members of the profession from different jurisdictions across the globe, in a dialogue on standards for the practice of psychology. In particular, the Board is pleased to have the opportunity for members to meet with members from the New Zealand Psychologists Board to discuss a range of matters of mutual interest.

The Board acknowledged the continuing efforts of existing State and Territory boards in preparing for implementation of the national scheme, as well as accrediting bodies, AHPRA and the National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project team. The Board looks forward to continued joint effort in coming months.

Brin Grenyer
Chair, Psychology Board of Australia
20 November 2009