

## Communiqué

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### Fifth meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia 26 February 2010

The fifth meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia (Board) was held on 26 February 2010 at the Hilton Melbourne Airport. The Board is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

At its fifth meeting the Board focused on its priorities in preparing for the introduction of the national registration and accreditation scheme and on preparatory work to enable it to fulfil its statutory functions from 1 July 2010.

#### Proposed registration standards

The registration standards and endorsements proposed by the Board will soon be considered for approval by Health Ministers at Ministerial Council. The standards specify the Board's requirements for:

- criminal history registration standard
- English language requirements registration standard
- professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard
- continuing professional development registration standard
- recency of practice registration standard
- registration standard for general registration
- registration standard for provisional registration, and
- area of practice endorsements.

The final standards will be published on the Board's website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au) soon after Ministers' approval.

#### Codes and Guidelines

In March 2010, the Board will consult on a range of codes and guidelines that will provide additional advice for psychologists about professional conduct, requirements under the national law and guidelines to support the proposed registration standards. The Board will release a consultation paper that sets out its proposed codes and guidelines in March and welcomes feedback from stakeholders.

#### Issues for consultation

- A proposed Code of Ethics for the psychology profession
- Guidelines on mandatory reporting, explaining the situations when a health practitioner or their employer must notify the Board through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency about a registered health practitioner's misconduct. There are four types of misconduct: intoxication, sexual misconduct, impairment and significantly departing from accepted professional standards. These guidelines are expected to be common across all National Boards.
- Guidelines on Advertising, including what is acceptable advertising, such as factual statements about the services a psychologist provides. The Guidelines also define what is unacceptable, such as not disclosing risks associated with a

treatment. The Guidelines clarify the acceptable use in advertising of titles, warning statements, advertising of price and how to complain about a breach of the Guidelines. These guidelines are likely to be common across all National Boards

- Guidelines on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which support the proposed registration standard and provide templates for maintaining CPD records
- Guidelines on area of practice endorsement, which support the proposed registration standard and provide details of the supervised practice program required to gain endorsement
- Guidelines on the 4+2 Internship program, which support the proposed registration standard and provide details of the supervision program and the responsibilities of supervisors and provisional psychologists.

### Current State and Territory boards

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (National Law) provides National Boards with powers in relation to State and Territory boards from 1 July 2010. Under section 36 of the National Law the Board can decide to have:

- no state and territory boards
- state and territory boards in all jurisdictions
- state and territory boards in some jurisdictions, including in the form of a board across more than one jurisdiction (sometimes referred to as a regional board).

The Psychology Board of Australia determined at its meeting in October 2009 that it needs to continue to operate state and territory boards as committees under section 36 of the National Law. The National Board has decided that current members of state and territory boards will transition (subject to passage of legislation and terms of appointment) into four state and territory boards from 1 July 2010.

Given that this is a significant change there is a transition period from 1 July 2010 – 1 July 2011 for the new membership numbers and new composition requirements to be implemented as follows:

- **NSW Board** with nine members
- **VIC/TAS/ACT regional board** with nine members (five from Victoria, two each from Tasmania and ACT)
- **QLD/NT regional board** with six members (four from Queensland and two from Northern Territory)
- **WA/SA regional board** with six members (three from each jurisdiction)

The Board is mindful that state and territory Health Ministers are responsible for appointing state and territory boards and will work with current boards and with Ministers to achieve this transition during the first year of the national registration scheme.

In making its decision the Board considered the following:

- acknowledgement of the expertise and experience of current state and territory board members and the need for their continued support in helping the Board perform its functions under the National Law
- the introduction of a National Board that will undertake many of the functions currently performed by state and territory boards in relation to setting policy and registration standards
- provision of two professional officers (psychologists) to support each regional board, to assist with administering the registration and other administrative functions requiring professional input
- the establishment of state and territory offices of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency in every state and territory to provide support for the management of individual registration decisions and complaints (notifications) locally
- the number of registrants and subsequent registration and notification matters handled in each jurisdiction and
- ensuring that state and territory boards have representation from each jurisdiction with expertise in regional matters.

The Board and Ministers will be writing shortly to all state and territory board members confirming the new arrangements and will continue to consult with members in all jurisdictions.

### **Registration Fees**

The Board will be setting the 2010-2011 registration fees at its meeting in March and this will be communicated to the profession in April.

### **Registration Transition Arrangements**

The Board considered its communication needs in the lead up to commencement of the national scheme. It will be working very closely with State and Territory Boards during this period. Every registered psychologist will receive a letter from AHPRA (the Agency supporting the Board) towards the end of April, detailing the transition process, advising them of their personal registration status and outlining what is required of them to ensure a safe transition to the National Scheme. Individual registrants are also encouraged to make sure that their contact details are up to date with their existing registration board, as this information will be transferred to the national scheme.

Brin Grenyer

Chair, Psychology Board of Australia

26 February 2010