

Communiqué

Sixth meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia 26 March 2010

The Psychology Board of Australia (Board) is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008*.

At its sixth meeting on 26 March 2010, the Board made decisions about a range of matters that will impact on the transition to the national registration and accreditation scheme. This Communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the decisions of the Board.

State and territory board structures and delegations

The Board will be responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines, approving accreditation standards and negotiating the health professions agreement which determines funding and service arrangements with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Agency).

State and territory boards will become committees of the national board and will be known as, for example, the 'New South Wales Board of the Psychology Board of Australia'. The Board has determined to delegate responsibility for all matters related to individual registered psychologists to state and territory boards. It will rely on these boards to make decisions about applications for registration and about notifications (complaints). The state and territory boards will be supported by staff of the Agency with an office in each state and territory. Appealable and very serious decisions will be made by the full state and territory board.

The Board will delegate to the Agency decisions that it considers to be routine and all administrative functions.

The Board encourages current state and territory board members and members who serve on panels to continue in their roles after 1 July 2010, to support the transition to the national scheme and ensure that their experience and expertise is retained. A letter to all state and territory board members will be sent shortly to provide information regarding the transition provisions for current members and commence the process to establish regional state and territory boards as outlined in the Board's fifth communiqué.

The Board recognises the importance of regular and frequent communication with state and territory boards and between those involved in similar activities in different states to ensure that the national scheme works effectively.

Transition arrangements

April letter

The Board will be writing to every registered psychologist in late April, to support the transition of all registrants into the national scheme. The letter will explain each psychologist's registration type from 1 July 2010. The letter will detail the information that will appear on the online national Register of Psychologists. The Board is urging all psychologists to make sure the contact details held by their current state or territory board are accurate and up to date before 30 June 2010.

The Board made a range of decisions about this transitioning process. In general, psychologists will transition to the type of registration that matches their current registration. While the name of some registration

categories will change, for example probationary psychologist to provisional psychologist in some states and territories. Please check the registration type allocated to you in the April letter and provide feedback to AHPRA if you believe there are any errors.

Conditions, undertakings and reprimands on the Register

The National Law requires the Board to publish conditions imposed and undertakings accepted from psychologists on the Register of Psychologists. However, the National Law also allows the Board to decide to not record a condition imposed or an undertaking accepted when the psychologist has an impairment, if it is necessary to protect the psychologist's privacy and there is not an overriding public interest for the condition or the details of the undertaking to be recorded.

For the first time, the Board is required to publish on the Register when a reprimand has been issued to a psychologist. The Board decided that it will routinely remove reprimands from the registers after five years if there has been no other health, conduct or performance action against the psychologist during that period. This applies to reprimands issued after 1 July 2010.

Proof of identity

The Board approved an approach for authenticating the identity of an individual who applies for registration. This approach relies on a 100-point check, consistent with the Attorney General's standard. It applies to all new applications for registration from 1 July 2010.

State and territory 4+2 internship programs

The Board in its last communiqué announced the release of proposed guidelines on a national 4+2 internship program to come into effect from 1 July 2010 for all new applications for provisional registration.

Current provisional and probationary psychologists in the process of completing state and territory 4+2 programs have until the 30 June 2013 to complete their programs and apply for general registration. From 1 July 2010 the state and territory board of the Psychology Board of Australia will consider any requests for extension due to special circumstances on a case by case basis.

Consultation on the use of psychological tests and approved supervisor guidelines

The Board will release in May 2010 two papers for consultation:

1. a proposed guideline for the recognition of approved supervisors which will include details regarding the training and professional development requirements for attaining and maintaining approved supervisor status, and
2. a consultation paper seeking stakeholder input on a project to identify any issues surrounding the use of psychological tests by unqualified or inadequately qualified individuals.

Both papers will be made available on the Board's website.

Communications plan

The Board recognises that as 1 July 2010 approaches, it is necessary to increase the communication with stakeholders. The Board approved a communications plan with the key features that include risk assessment and issues management, external communications, stakeholder engagement, government relations, media-management and consultation strategies.

Conclusion

There is an increasing number of decisions that the Board needs to make as 1 July 2010 approaches. The Board acknowledges that the transition to the national scheme involves potential risk. Individual psychologists can help reduce this risk by reading the April letter from the Board carefully and making sure that all details are correct. As a preliminary step the Board encourages all registrants to ensure their contact details held by their existing state or territory registration board are up to date.

Brin Grenyer

Chair

26 March 2010