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Subject: Fw: Comment on the PBA Proposed Code and Guidelines for Psychology

TO: Associate Professor Brin Greyner
Psychology Board of Australia

Dear Professor Greyner,

I am writing this email as I have just read the PBA proposed Code and Guidelines for Psychology, and feel that this document fails to reflect the actual state of play of applied psychology in Australia today.

Let me firstly introduce myself. I am currently employed by the University of New South Wales as the Placement Co-ordinator of the Organisational Psychology program. In this role I am responsible for arranging placements for Masters and PhD students to meet the current 1000 placement hours requirements. In addition, I am the Director of The Career Research and Assessment Service (CRAS) at UNSW which, as a commercial unit of the School of Psychology at UNSW, provides career counselling and guidance services for students at both UNSW and Sydney Universities, and for staff at UNSW.

Since graduating with a MA (honours) degree in Psychology from the University of Canterbury, NZ in 1969, I have been continuously employed as an Organisational Psychologist, in New Zealand (Ministry of Defence), USA (Battelle Memorial Institute and Ohio State University), India (United Nations), Papua New Guinea (United Nations and BHP), and Australia (State Rail Authority of NSW, and UNSW). Over this 42 year period I have always been regarded as a Psychologist, and have been regarded by my various employers as a psychologist first and foremost, with special expertise in the organisational area.

I registered with NSW Psychologists Registration Board in 1985 and served as a member of the Board from 1995 until 1998. I have been a member of the APS since 1985 and a member of the College of Organisational Psychologists since 1986. I was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 2004.

Why am I telling you this you may ask? Because I believe your document seriously misrepresents and fails to relate to those psychologists who choose to go down an organisational employment pathway after graduation from University. Let me illustrate by providing two examples.

First, the requirement that all Psychologist be competent in providing psychotherapy for the treatment of psychological disorders. I have never treated anyone for a psychological disorder in my life. However, I have designed and managed psychological interventions intended to improve the performance of individual employees or groups of employees, and I do give counselling and advice to university students and university staff who come to CRAS for help with their career. But these clients are not suffering from a psychological disorder. They are individuals drawn from a population of "normal" people, who like most people from time to time, need some help in making important decisions, or resolving personal difficulties. When I worked for the State Rail Authority of NSW as Chief Psychologist, I had a list of Psychiatrists and Clinical Psychologists that I could refer employees to, which I used from time to time. There is all the difference in the world between recognising someone who needs help and providing such personal assistance yourself. I learned a long time ago that I am not qualified in treating individuals with psychological disorders and, as a consequence, I refer-on individuals who need focussed psychotherapeutic or a psychiatric interventions.

Second, the listing of assessment instruments detailed in the Appendix B to Guidelines for 4+2 Internship program, may be okay for clinical psychologists, but it does not adequately deal with the type of assessments typically conducted by Organisational Psychologists in Australia today. Organisational psychologists are primarily concerned with organisational functioning, and with having well adjusted, engaged and motivated employees who can contribute in a meaningful way to the organisation's functioning.

There are three types of assessments typically routinely performed by Organisational Psychologists which are not mentioned in the Appendix. The first type of assessment is of ability or aptitude. For example, many Organisational Psychologist will routinely administer tests of abstract, verbal and numerical reasoning to candidates applying for roles within organisations. The tests used are carefully selected so that they are pitched at the appropriate level for the applicant population, have appropriate norms and have good psychometric properties. Tests such as the Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices, the First Graduate Assessment test series and the SHL suite of assessment instruments are good examples.

The second type of assessment instrument commonly used by Organisational Psychologists are instruments designed to assist psychologists in conducting Organisational Development activities. For example this would include measures of team types or styles such as the Belpin Team Types Inventory or the Team Management Systems Questionnaire, instruments that look at workplace motivation such as the SHL Motivational Questionnaire or Pryor's Work Aspect Preference Scale, 360 degree assessment measures such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Interpersonal effectiveness measures such as the FIRO-B, and Emotional Intelligence measures such as the MSCEIT and the Bar-On EQi.

The third type of instrument commonly used by Organisational Psychologists are those used to profile "normal" personality. The most psychometrically sound ones are the SHL Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ), Cattell's 16PF, the California Personality Inventory (the CPI), the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), and the MBTI.

In summary , I feel that the PBA proposed code and Guidelines is too clinically slanted and fails to reflect the type of work performed by Organisational Psychologist in Australia today. In a sentence- we do not usually deal with persons requiring psychotherapeutic interventions, although we are routinely concerned with individuals who require a psychological or managerial intervention to make them more productive, happier, more engaged and healthier in a workplace setting than they would otherwise be. Your code gets in the way of Organisational Psychologists functioning effectively, by imposing inflexible prescriptive requirements that are inappropriate, too clinically focussed and just not relevant to the work that we do.

Sincerely yours,

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