

This email is to register my support for the Consultation Paper on Registration Standards and Related Matters, published by the Psychology Board of Australia.

The paper proposes several solutions to problems placing the public at risk from untrained, incompetent and dangerous practitioners. It is unreasonable to expect that, when in need of psychological services, members of the public will be able to make accurate judgments about the competence and ethical behaviour of those offering psychological services. It is a conflict of interest for the Australian Psychological Society (APS) to be given this task, as it is financially dependent on its members. An independent registration board is needed to protect the public. Some of the ways in which the consultation paper does this is by recommending:

1. Higher training standards for registration that will lead to Australia approaching international benchmarks.
2. Practitioners receiving public money under the "Better Access to Mental Health Care" program need to be demonstrably skilled in the clinical techniques practised. This program needs to be independently monitored outside the APS, the professional body dominated by the voting power of less skilled psychologists.
3. The specialist registration proposals will ensure that services will be provided by people trained in their delivery according to explicit national standards.
4. More explicit supervision requirements will allow better monitoring of what psychologists do in their consulting rooms, both in relation to technical competence, and also ethical professional practice. Isolated sole practitioners are more likely to engage in unorthodox treatments and to sexually abuse their clients.

Thanks and keep well,

Mark Allerton, NSW